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DECEMBER 2003/JANUARY 2004 ISSUE 62



38



41

SPECIAL FOLDOUT

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COVER RECIPE

Glazed Pork Roast with Carrots,
Parsnips & Pears

UP FRONT

- 6 Index
Recipes and ingredients
- 8 Menus
Entertaining ideas, from
simple to spectacular
- 10 Letters
- 14 Contributors
- 16 In Season
Rosemary
- 20 Enjoying Wine
Pairing red wine with beef
- 22 Book Reviews
New books for every
cook on your gift list
- 24 Equipment
Food processors
- 30 Kitchen Detail
A small, sleek kitchen
- 32 Great Finds
Holiday wish list:
olive oils; Champagne;
kitchen gadgets
- 34 Food Science
Avoid meaty mistakes
- 36 Readers' Tips



32



24



30



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46



50



54



60



64

FEATURES

- 38 Start Your Party with Savory Coins**
Tasty rosemary, Cheddar, and sesame hors d'oeuvres to nibble with drinks, from an easy slice-and-bake dough
by Abigail Johnson Dodge

- 41 CHEF VS. CHEF**
Two New Ways to Roast Tenderloin
Two chefs pick different methods to prepare this elegant cut of beef for a festive holiday meal
by Tony Rosenfeld

- 46 Fast, Flavorful Vegetable Sautés**
These side dishes are simple to make on weeknights, yet equally impressive for special occasions
by Maryellen Driscoll

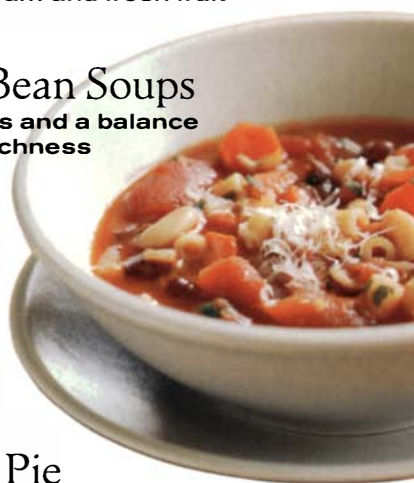
- 50 A Marinade for Roast Chicken**
A double-duty marinade makes a pan sauce, too
by Susie Middleton

- 54 Chocolate Pavlova**
Make a chewy, brownie-like meringue with a crackly crust and top it with whipped cream and fresh fruit
by Gail Gand

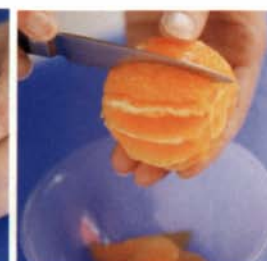
- 56 A Lighter Touch with Bean Soups**
These soups deliver fresh flavors and a balance of textures, without sacrificing richness
by Tony Rosenfeld

- 60 Three Methods for Macaroni and Cheese**
Three creative takes on a comfort classic
by Amy Albert

- 64 STEP BY STEP**
Classic Boston Cream Pie
Make this elegant dessert in stages
by Greg Patent



56



70

IN THE BACK

- 70 From Our Test Kitchen**
- ❖ identifying lentils
 - ❖ defining a "pinch"
 - ❖ segmenting citrus
 - ❖ trimming a tenderloin
 - ❖ cooking duck breast
 - ❖ using tahini
 - ❖ tasting supermarket balsamic vinegars

- 78 Where to Buy It**

- 79 Advertiser Index**

- 84 2003 Recipe Index**

- 86 Nutrition Information**

BACK COVER

Artisan Foods
Panetonne la Veneziana

70



recipes

- ◆ Quick (under 45 minutes)
- ◆ Make-ahead
- ◆ Vegetarian
- ◆ Baking

Cover Recipes

- ◆ Glazed Pork Roast with Carrots, Parsnips & Pears, 86C

Appetizers

- ◆ Cheddar-Cayenne Coins, 39
- ◆ Hummus with Mellow Garlic & Cumin, 74
- ◆ Rosemary-Parmesan Coins, 40
- ◆ Sesame Coins, 40

Main Dishes

- Beef Tenderloin Roasted in a Salt Crust, 44
- ◆ Black Bean & Goat Cheese Quesadillas with Guacamole, 86C
- ◆ Chicken Roulades Stuffed with Goat Cheese & Sun-Dried Tomatoes, 86C
- Chicken with Lemon Rosemary Balsamic Mustard Marinade, 51
- Chicken with Spanish Honey-Cumin Marinade with Apricots & Olives, 51
- Chicken with Triple-Sesame Ginger Marinade, 51
- Chicken with Thai Lemongrass Peanut Marinade, 51
- ◆ Cod Stew with Chorizo, Leeks & Potatoes, 86C
- ◆ Glazed Pork Roast with Carrots, Parsnips & Pears, 86C
- Marinated Roast Chicken with Pan Sauce (Master Recipe), 52

- ◆ Pan-Roasted Duck Breasts with Sherry, Honey & Thyme Sauce, 72
- ◆ Sautéed Pork Chops with Grape, Rosemary & Red Wine Pan Sauce, 86C
- Slow-Roasted Beef Tenderloin with Thyme, 42
- ◆ Spicy Meatballs with Fragrant Tomato Sauce, 86C

Pasta

- ◆ Baked Pasta with Cream & Parmigiano Reggiano, 63
- ◆ Luxurious Four-Cheese Macaroni & Cheese, 60
- ◆ Tex-Mex Macaroni & Cheese with Green Chiles, 62

Side Dishes

- ◆ Cauliflower & Green Beans with Indian Spices, 49
- ◆ Creamed Spinach Amandine, 43
- ◆ Fennel & Red Onion with Arugula, 48
- ◆ Green Beans & Radicchio with Shaved Parmesan, 47
- ◆ Mushrooms & Spinach with Soppressata Crisps, 49
- ◆ Potatoes Mousseline, 43
- ◆ Skillet-Roasted Rosemary Potatoes, 18
- ◆ Warm Potato Salad with Gorgonzola, Baby Spinach & Walnuts, 45

Salads

- ◆ Frisée Salad with Oranges & Pistachios, 86C
- ◆ Warm Potato Salad with Gorgonzola, Baby Spinach & Walnuts, 45

Sauces, Condiments & Seasonings

- ◆ Red Wine Sauce, 42

Soups

- ◆ Basic Dried Beans, 57
- Creamy Chickpea Soup with Crisp Chorizo, 58
- ◆ Roasted Vegetable Minestrone, 58
- Spiced Lentil Soup with Herbed Yogurt, 59
- White Bean Soup with Sautéed Shrimp & Garlic Croutons, 56

Desserts

- ◆ Boston Cream Pie, 66
- ◆ Chocolate Ganache, 67
- ◆ Chocolate Pavlova with Tangerine Whipped Cream, 55
- ◆ French Butter Sponge Cake, 68
- ◆ Individual Orange & Chocolate Bread Puddings, 86C
- ◆ Pastry Cream, 65
- ◆ Rum Syrup, 65
- ◆ White Icing, 67



49



51

ingredients

- Bacon, cooking, 34
- Balsamic vinegars, supermarket brands, 76; *tradizionale*, 70
- Beans, cooking for soups, 56-57; cooking times, 57; puréeing, 56
- Béchamel, for binding & thickening, 61
- Beef, for burgers, 34
- Beef tenderloin, salt-crusting, 44-45; slow-roasting, 42-43; trimming the chain, 71
- Cabbage, freezing, 36
- Chicken, preventing overcooking, 34; roasting in a marinade, 50-54; slicing for sautés, 34
- Chorizo, 86C
- Citrus, segmenting, 71
- Cream, for binding & thickening, 63
- Custards, for binding & thickening, 62
- Duck breast, buying, 73; cooking, 72; doneness, 73
- Garlic, peeling in quantity, 36
- Guasca leaves, 10
- Ham, carving, 34
- Lentils, cooking for soups, 59; types, 71;
- Meringue, making & stabilizing, 55
- Pastry cream, making, 65
- Pumpkin, roasting, 10
- Rosemary, growing, 16; using, 16-18
- Tahini, storing & using, 74
- Vegetables, sautéing, 46-47; roasting for soups, 56, 58

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dramatic holiday dinner

Cheddar-Cayenne Coins, p. 39



Beef Tenderloin Roasted in a Salt Crust, p. 44



Warm Potato Salad with Gorgonzola, Baby Spinach & Walnuts, p. 45



Classic Boston Cream Pie, p. 66

Entertaining ideas, from simple to spectacular

low-stress holiday dinner

Slow-Roasted Beef Tenderloin with Thyme and Red Wine Sauce, p. 42



Green Beans & Radicchio with Parmesan, p. 47



Skillet-Roasted Rosemary Potatoes, p. 18



Chocolate Pavlova with Tangerine Whipped Cream, p. 55

Bistro-Style Supper

White Bean Soup with Garlic Croutons, p. 56



Pan-Roasted Duck Breasts with Sherry, Honey & Thyme Sauce, p. 72



Fennel & Red Onion with Arugula, p. 48



Selection of aged cheeses with toasted walnuts (for cheese ideas, see p. 78)

Mostly Make-Ahead Dinner

Hummus with Mellow Garlic & Cumin, served with pita toasts, p. 74



Roast Chicken with Lemon Rosemary Balsamic Mustard Marinade, p. 51



Potatoes Mousseline, p. 43



Ice cream drizzled with Chocolate Ganache, p. 67

Whether you're hosting family for the week or planning a New Year's Eve blowout, we've got a menu for you. Remember to check the yields on the recipes, as you may have to halve or double them to suit your needs.

ON THE COVER

Weeknight Company

Frisée Salad with Oranges & Pistachios, p. 86C



Easy Roast: Glazed Pork Roast with Carrots, Parsnips & Pears, p. 86C



Individual Orange & Chocolate Bread Puddings, p. 86C

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from the editor

Is it done?

On the road to becoming a good cook, you learn to use your senses to help you decide when something is cooked just right. You smell nuts toasting, watch a cake batter rise, and listen to sauté pans sizzle.

But while you're travelling down this road, how can you be sure when something is done? Guessing is frustrating (we've all been there); nonetheless, using your instincts is probably wiser than following a recipe that suggests cooking at a certain temperature for a certain length of time. Since the accuracy and consistency of ovens and cooktops vary so dramatically, it's really impossible to say that my cake will be done in exactly the same amount of time as yours.

That's why every *Fine Cooking* recipe has a "done-ness test." It may be as simple as the temperature reading from an instant-read thermometer, or it may be a more sensory clue: "Cook until the sauce is reduced by half, deeply colored, and thick enough to coat a wooden spoon."

I mention this during this time of year, because I know if you're like me, you're going to be entertaining a lot in the next several weeks. What with family dynamics, unpredictable friends, and winter weather, the last thing you need is uncertainty about when your expensive roast will be perfectly cooked to medium rare.

Don't miss our menu ideas on p. 8. Happy entertaining—and may all your holiday recipes be perfectly "done."

—Susie Middleton, editor

The great (canned) pumpkin debate

I love making pumpkin pie. Growing up on a farm in Saskatchewan, we had our share of pie, a staple dessert. I started baking pies at age 13, and I still enjoy it. I must say, I disagree with Regan Daley (Great Pumpkin Desserts, *Fine Cooking* #60), who says she chooses canned pumpkin over fresh. I place the whole pumpkin on a cookie sheet and bake at 350°F until it collapses (about an hour). I remove it, let it cool so I can handle it, then open it up, scoop out the pulp, and discard the seeds and skin. I place all the pulp in a blender and use it just

as you would canned pumpkin. The flavor is unbeatable!

—Eleanor Zabolotney,
Medicine Hat, Alberta

A leafy—and elusive—Latin herb for chicken soup

I noted that your recipe for ajiaco (Colombian chicken soup) in *Fine Cooking* #60 did not include what I consider an essential ingredient—guasca leaves. Do you know the name of this plant in English and a possible source?

—Gina Bain,
Huntsville, Alabama

Author's reply: Most people feel that guasca leaves are a very important ingredient to an ajiaco.

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EDITOR
Susie Middleton
ART DIRECTOR
Steve Hunter

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Sarah Jay

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ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Rebecca Freedman, Kimberly Y. Masibay

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SENIOR COPY/PRODUCTION EDITOR
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ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR
Annie Giammattei

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Kim Landi

PHOTO COORDINATOR
Jessica Bard

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
**Shirley O. Corriher,
Abigail Johnson Dodge, Tim Gaiser,
Tony Rosenfeld, Molly Stevens**

PUBLISHER
Martha Holmberg

MARKETING MANAGER
Ellen Kracht

SINGLE COPY SALES MANAGER
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ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
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Molly Cole

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Joel Burger, Laura Haddad Rose

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Editorial:

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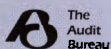
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Guasca is a wild herb that's quite pungent, a bit of a cross between oregano and thyme in taste. Some say the taste is sour, some say salty. Guasca grows predominantly in Colombia and is very difficult to find in the U.S., which is why I chose to omit it from my recipe. It can be found in Latin supermarkets in a dried form, but I personally don't care for the taste it imparts to the ajíaco.

—Tania Sigal

An olive oil bath washes away chile burn

In the Letters section of *Fine Cooking* #60, a reader suggests using dairy products like yogurt or ice cream for getting the stinging capsaicin from hot chiles off one's hands. I came up with another, very effective method in a moment of desperation, based on the knowledge that capsaicin is more soluble in oil than in water: I washed the burn with cooking oil (I used low-grade olive oil, the cheapest oil I had on hand) and dish detergent. To follow my method, pour a cup or so of oil into a bowl in or near the sink. Wet your hands with the oil, squirt some detergent onto your hands, suds up (the detergent

will mix with oil as well as it does with water), and rinse off with more oil. Then wash with detergent again to rinse off the oil.

—Rebecca Barr, via email

A crust correction, and a note on caramel

The recipe for Tender Pie Crust in *Fine Cooking* #60, p. 79, should have called for "13½ ounces (3 cups) all-purpose flour." As printed, it called for "2 cups (about 13½ ounces) all-purpose flour," so the weight was correct, but the volume was not. (We recommend weighing flour for the greatest accuracy.) If made with 2 cups flour, the dough will be rather wet and sticky, but it is possible to roll it out and bake it into quite a tasty but fragile crust.

And one last oversight on our part—the Tarte Tatin recipe in that issue (p. 65) lists ⅛ teaspoon kosher salt in the ingredient list, but doesn't mention that it should be added with the sugar after melting the butter to make the caramel. The little bit of salt makes the caramel more intensely flavored and brings out the fruitiness of the apples.

—the editors ♦

Here's the place to share your thoughts on our recent articles or your food and cooking philosophies. Send your comments to Letters, *Fine Cooking*, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506, or by email to fc@taunton.com.

Fine Cooking...around the country

January 27-31, 2004:

Contributing editor Molly Stevens teaches classes at Sur La Table stores in **Scottsdale, Arizona**, January 27; **Salt Lake City** January 28; **Kirkland, Washington**, January 29 and 30; and **Portland, Oregon**, January 31. For class schedules and registration information visit www.surlatable.com

February 18 & 19, 2004:

Publisher Martha Holmberg teaches classes at Cooks of Crocus Hill in **Minneapolis** and

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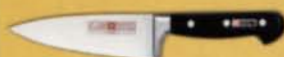
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Regularly: Contributing editor Abby Dodge can be heard on "Good Food with Evan Kleiman" on KCRW in the **Santa Monica** area. Also, senior editor Amy Albert appears regularly with "The Cooking Couple" in the **Boston** area. Check local listings for dates and times.

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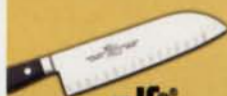
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ABIGAIL JOHNSON DODGE ("Savory Coins," p. 38) is a contributing editor to *Fine Cooking*. She has worked as a pastry chef both in the U.S. and in France, and was *Fine Cooking*'s test kitchen director for seven years. Abby's books include *Great Fruit Desserts* and *Williams Sonoma Dessert*. She wrote the New England and mid-Atlantic portions of *Savoring America*, which was nominated for a James Beard award. She's working on her next book, *The Weekend Baker*.

Both in the recipes she contributed to "Chef vs. Chef: Beef Tenderloin" (p. 41) and at Boulevard, her bustling 145-seat restaurant in San Francisco, **NANCY OAKES** likes to serve up food that's simple but elegant. A self-taught cook who has worked with masters like Guy Savoy and Joel Robuchon, Nancy won the 2001 James Beard award for best chef, California. **BARBARA LYNCH**, the other participant in the challenge, pursues a similar understated approach at her restaurant, No. 9 Park in Boston. She has just opened a tiny oyster bar, B&G's Oyster, and an upscale butchery, The Butcher Shop, both in Boston's South End. Barbara received the 2003 James Beard award for best chef, Northeast.

Fine Cooking editor-at-large **MARYELLEN DRISCOLL** knows that even the most avid cooks face time constraints, which is why she's partial to her "Fast Vegetable Sautés" (p. 46). She juggles working for *Fine Cooking* with farm life, raising organic vegetables and



Maryellen Driscoll



Tony Rosenfeld



Gale Gand

From a career as an academic with a Ph.D. in zoology, **GREG PATENT** ("Classic Boston Cream Pie," p. 64), returned to cooking, his first love, when he went to work as national spokesperson for Cuisinarts, Inc., in 1982. He taught cooking classes all over the country and hosted a television series broadcast nationally on The Learning Channel. These days, having finished his latest book, *Baking in America* (winner of the 2003 James Beard award for best baking book of the year), Greg writes regularly for several national magazines and co-hosts "The Food Guys," a weekly Montana Public Radio show every Sunday morning.



pasture-raised poultry with her husband in upstate New York.

SUSIE MIDDLETON ("Marinated Roast Chicken," p. 50) published her first chicken recipe (for spicy fajitas) in a community cookbook twenty years ago. Many chickens later, she still likes coming up with new ways to cook it. Susie is the editor of *Fine Cooking*.

While travelling through New Zealand, **GALE GAND** ("Chocolate Pavlova," p. 54) encountered pavlovas on nearly every elegant restaurant's dessert menu. She now features the dessert in many forms at TRU, the renowned Chicago restaurant where she is the executive pastry chef and partner. Gale hosts her own television show, *Sweet Dreams*, on the Food Network. The 2001 recipient of the James Beard award for outstanding pastry chef, she has written many cookbooks; her next is *Gale Gand's Short & Sweet*.

Fine Cooking contributing editor **TONY ROSENFELD** ("Lighter Bean Soups," p. 56) recently relocated to the North Shore of Boston, where he works as a food

writer and a restaurant consultant. One of the fringe benefits of living in the northeast, he says, is that warming soups are a necessity in the cold winter months.

BEN BARKER ("Three Methods for Macaroni & Cheese," p. 60) is the chef-owner of Magnolia Grill in Durham, North Carolina, along with his wife, Karen, who is Magnolia's pastry chef and Ben's co-author of *Not Afraid of Flavor*. Ben is the recipient of many citations, including a James Beard award. **ROBERT DEL GRANDE** is the chef-owner of Cafe Annie and Cafe Express in Houston. After receiving a Ph.D. in biochemistry, he turned from academia to the kitchen. Robert's cooking—best known for its deliciously innovative use of southwestern ingredients—has nabbed numerous awards in the past 20 years. **JOHANNE KILLEEN** and **GEORGE GERMON** are the chef-owners of Al Forno in Providence, Rhode Island. Considered leading interpreters of Italian food in America, they're the authors of *Cucina Simpatica* and are working on a new pasta book.

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Rosemary

the perfect winter herb

BY RUTH LIVELY



There are so many reasons why rosemary is my favorite herb: I love its pungent aroma, which wakes up my nose and taste buds and gets me thinking about cooking. I admire its handsome dark green, needle-like leaves and its dainty pale blue flowers. And I absolutely adore the look this Mediterranean shrub gives to my patio in summer and my sunroom in winter.

Of course, I also appreciate rosemary's strong, piny flavor, which is more versatile than you might think (you can even use it to flavor sweets and baked goods; see p. 18). Rosemary pairs wonderfully with most meats. It's famous as a partner to lamb and pork, but it's equally suited to chicken, beef, veal, venison, turkey, duck, and game birds.

Rosemary's bold flavor adds an important counterpoint to rich, sweet, or starchy foods.

Use it with dried beans, winter squash, potatoes, onions, peppers, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, and breads and baked goods. Good seasoning companions for rosemary include garlic, citrus zest and juice (especially orange and lemon), tomatoes, and olives.

Because of its potent flavor, the one caveat is not to overdo seasoning with rosemary. It's also a good idea to use a sharp knife when chopping rosemary; a dull knife would bruise the leaves and make them taste bitter. A clean cut releases just the right amount of the potent oils.

Shopping for fresh rosemary

Fresh rosemary is now available at most grocery stores. You'll often see it in packages of 4- to 5-inch sprigs, or as bundles of long, straight branches. Be sure the leaves look fresh, green, and pliable, not dry, brittle, or blackened. Store it in the refrigerator wrapped in a damp dishtowel. Or, even better, grow your own rosemary to have available year-round.

Growing rosemary, indoors & out

I grow my own rosemary so I can always have fresh leaves with the most flavorful oils whenever I want them. Besides, a terra cotta pot of rosemary looks so pretty and smells so good.

Bring a pot of rosemary inside for the winter. Although common rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) is only hardy to about 25°F, it adapts happily to a container, so you can bring it inside if your winters get below that temperature. (A few hardy varieties—'Arp' and 'Hill Hardy' are two—have been known to survive single-digit temperatures if well mulched.)

Pick a cool, sunny spot. Your rosemary plant will be happiest near a sunny

window (a southern exposure is ideal) in a cool spot (a chilly room helps deter powdery mildew, which can attack indoor rosemary). It's also important to get the watering right, because rosemary is sensitive to both over- and underwatering. Wait until the top of the soil is dry and then water thoroughly. If you're prone to forget to water, use water-absorbing polymer crystals mixed into the potting mix to help prevent the plant from drying out completely. Finally, to avoid lanky growth, don't fertilize in winter.

Repot rosemary every spring to keep it healthy and growing strong. Once your plant is in its final, biggest pot, you can repot it in the same container. Pull the plant from the pot and, using a sharp knife, trim away an inch or two off the bottom of the rootball and an inch all around the sides. Repot the plant using fresh potting soil that's been boosted with some time-release fertilizer. To make up for the loss of some of its roots, trim the top back accordingly. I've kept rosemaries going for years this way. As the plant ages, its trunk becomes gnarled and full of character. For sources for rosemary plants, see *Where to Buy It*, p. 78.

(Continued on p. 18)

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Skillet-Roasted Rosemary Potatoes

Serves three to four.

The best kind of pan for roasting these potatoes is an old-fashioned cast-iron skillet. I use a 10-inch skillet for about 8 potatoes (16 halves), but if your skillet is 12 inches, you can fit 10 potatoes (20 halves). I prefer smallish potatoes—2 or 3 inches in diameter—cut just in half, which keeps the interiors moist and creamy. I like to use coarse sea salt, as the large crystals give a nice crunch without oversalting the potatoes, but kosher salt works nicely, too.

2 to 3 tablespoons olive oil
8-inch sprig rosemary; more to taste
¾ teaspoon kosher salt
8 to 10 small red potatoes or other waxy potatoes

Heat the oven to 425°F. Pour enough of the oil into a large cast-iron skillet, tilting it, to cover the bottom of the pan. Strip the leaves from the rosemary sprig and scatter them over the bottom of the pan. Sprinkle the salt over the rosemary. Scrub the potatoes, cut them in half, and set them cut side down on the rosemary and salt. Roast on the lowest oven rack until the potatoes are tender and the bottoms are crisp and well browned, 30 to 40 minutes.

Try using whole rosemary leaves and sprigs

- ❖ **USE ROSEMARY AS A BED FOR ROASTED POTATOES** (see the recipe above). Strip off the leaves first, but don't chop them.
- ❖ **WRAP SPRIGS AROUND ROASTS OR CHICKEN** destined for the rotisserie or grill; secure them with kitchen twine. Pork and lamb work especially well.
- ❖ **USE ROSEMARY AS A BASTING BRUSH.** Bunch several branches, tie them with kitchen twine, and use to baste meats on the grill or in the oven.
- ❖ **TUCK A FEW SPRIGS IN THE CAVITY OF A CHICKEN** or game bird before roasting.
- ❖ **USE STRIPPED ROSEMARY BRANCHES AS SKEWERS.** Although coarse and tough, rosemary branches stripped of their leaves still have lots of flavor. Save the thickest, straightest ones to use as skewers.

Bake, roast, or braise with chopped rosemary

- ❖ **ADD ROSEMARY TO A SIMPLE CHICKEN BRAISE.** Brown seasoned chicken breasts or thighs in olive oil, add rosemary leaves, a bit of chicken broth, and dry vermouth; cover and braise until tender.
- ❖ **TOSS ROSEMARY WITH WINTER VEGETABLES BEFORE ROASTING.** Cut vegetables like sweet potatoes or squash into large dice; season with salt, pepper, olive oil, and coarsely chopped rosemary. Spread in one layer in a roasting pan and roast at 400°F until tender.
- ❖ **FLAVOR YOUR FAVORITE PIZZA DOUGH WITH ROSEMARY.** Add a tablespoon of finely chopped rosemary to focaccia or pizza dough in the early stages of mixing. Combine with a little black pepper for interest.
- ❖ **BAKE A BATCH OF FLAKY BISCUITS** spiked with a teaspoon or two of finely chopped rosemary; add a cup of grated sharp Cheddar.
- ❖ **FOR BUTTER COOKIES WITH A TWIST,** add a little finely chopped rosemary and grated orange zest. Try adding this combination to pound cake recipes, too.

Ruth Lively was the senior editor of Kitchen Gardener magazine. ♦

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Pairing Beef with Red Wine

BY TIM GAISER

It's the season when you might be considering prime rib, roast tenderloin, or another special beef recipe for a holiday dinner. Or maybe the cold weather has you craving a long-simmering beef stew. And most likely, you'll be thinking of serving red wine with that beef. But which red? There are definitely some that work better than others, depending on the dish, but the good news is that you have plenty of flexibility. Here's how to make great matches.

Tannins and protein, a mutual attraction

Red wine tastes good with beef because of the interplay between the tannins in the wine and the protein in the meat. Tannins are compounds found in all red wines, and they come mostly from the grapes' skins and seeds, as well as from the barrels in which the wine was aged. They give red wine aging potential and are an essential part of a wine's structure and balance.

By itself, a tannic wine can feel rough and astringent (imagine tea steeped too long). But as soon as tannins become bound to protein, everything changes. A glass of young, tannic Cabernet Sauvignon isn't the greatest choice to linger over before dinner, but take a sip after a bite of seared filet, and you've got a mouthwatering combination.

tip:

When serving an older vintage, keep the dish as simple as possible (think roast tenderloin) to avoid overwhelming the wine.

Let the cut of meat guide you

Roast tenderloin

is a lean cut, so it's a perfect companion for a red whose tannins have softened a bit from aging. Bordeaux is a great choice, as are Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot from California or Australia. And don't overlook Spain or Italy.

- ❖ 2000 Hawk Crest Cabernet Sauvignon, California, \$12
- ❖ 1998 El Coto "Coto de Imaz" Reserva Rioja, Spain, \$18
- ❖ 1998 Melini "La Selvanella" Chianti Classico, Italy, \$22
- ❖ 2000 Château au Pont de Guitres, Lalande de Pomerol, Bordeaux, \$35

Prime rib

is richer, and it's delicious served with a younger or more tannic Barbera or Cabernet-based wine or a more robust Merlot, Bordeaux, or Bordeaux-style blend.

- ❖ 2000 Hess Select Cabernet Sauvignon, California, \$15
- ❖ 2001 Revello Barbera d'Alba, \$18
- ❖ 2000 Casa Lapostolle Merlot "Cuvee Alexandre," Chile, \$24
- ❖ 1998 Château Pontet-Canet, Pauillac, \$35

tip:

Stay away from sweet or fruity flavorings with beef—their sweetness will flatten the flavors of a dry red wine.

Grilled meat can handle brawny wine

The cut of meat and its flavoring can have more of an impact on the pairing than does the cooking method. But grilled beef is an exception—it's different from seared or roasted meat because it packs more intense flavor. Balance the grill's intensity by serving a rich, tannic red. There are lots to choose from: Australian Shiraz and California Zinfandel are two of my favorites, especially with a grilled New York strip.

- ❖ 2002 Rosemount Estate Shiraz-Cabernet, \$9
- ❖ 2001 Greg Norman Shiraz, Limestone Coast, \$19
- ❖ 2001 Seghesio "Old Vines" Zinfandel, Sonoma, \$24

Leaner cuts like filet do best with aged reds or wines that are less tannic. Richer cuts with a higher fat content, like a rib-eye steak, can stand up to a more concentrated and tannic red.

Pan-seared filet

is great paired with a moderately tannic red like Merlot or a medium-weight Australian Shiraz. The fruit in these wines is lovely with the filet's browned, caramelized crust, and their tannins won't overwhelm a lean cut of meat.

- ❖ 2001 Blackstone Merlot, California, \$10
- ❖ 2000 d'Arenberg Shiraz "Footbolt," McLaren Vale, Australia, \$18
- ❖ 2000 Columbia Valley Seven Hills Merlot, Washington, \$24

Brisket, short ribs & other stew meats

are usually cooked slowly for a long time. The sinewy cuts break down and take on big, rich flavor. I like Rhône blends—the robust tannins, herbal notes, and earthiness of young Grenache-based wines like Châteauneuf du Pape and Gigondas work beautifully with the rich flavors.

- ❖ 2002 Domaine de la Mor-dorée Côtes du Rhône, \$10
- ❖ 2000 Mon Cœur Côtes du Rhône, \$20
- ❖ 2000 Château de Beaucastel Châteauneuf du Pape, \$55

Tim Gaiser, a Fine Cooking contributing editor, is a master sommelier. ♦

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Top pick

If I had to choose just one book this season, I'd take **Zingerman's Guide to Good Eating** (Houghton Mifflin, \$35 hardcover; \$19.95 paperback), by food-importer extraordinaire Ari Weinzwieg. In chapters crammed with wisdom, travel tales, food-buying tips, and inviting recipes, Weinzwieg celebrates and elucidates life's essentials: i.e., oil, vinegar, grain, cheese, chocolate. This stupendous volume offers fundamentals for the neophyte and soul food for the devout.

Winter is the perfect time to retreat to a warm kitchen and explore new cuisines and techniques. All it takes to get started is a great cookbook.

Anyone curious about what it's like to live and cook in Rome will love **In a Roman Kitchen** (Wiley, \$35), by Jo Bettaja, who founded and ran the popular cooking school Lo Scaldovivande. The book's 200-plus recipes follow the progression of a typical Roman meal: antipasti, pasta, main dish, salad, dessert. Classics like Penne all' Arrabbiata and Meatballs in Savory Tomato Sauce are predictable delights. But the surprise stunners are quick, delicious dishes—Spaghetti with Arugula and Angelica's Pasta with Raisins & Pine Nuts—gleaned from mod-

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BY KIMBERLY Y. MASIBAY

ern Romans, who are as pressed for time as the rest of us.

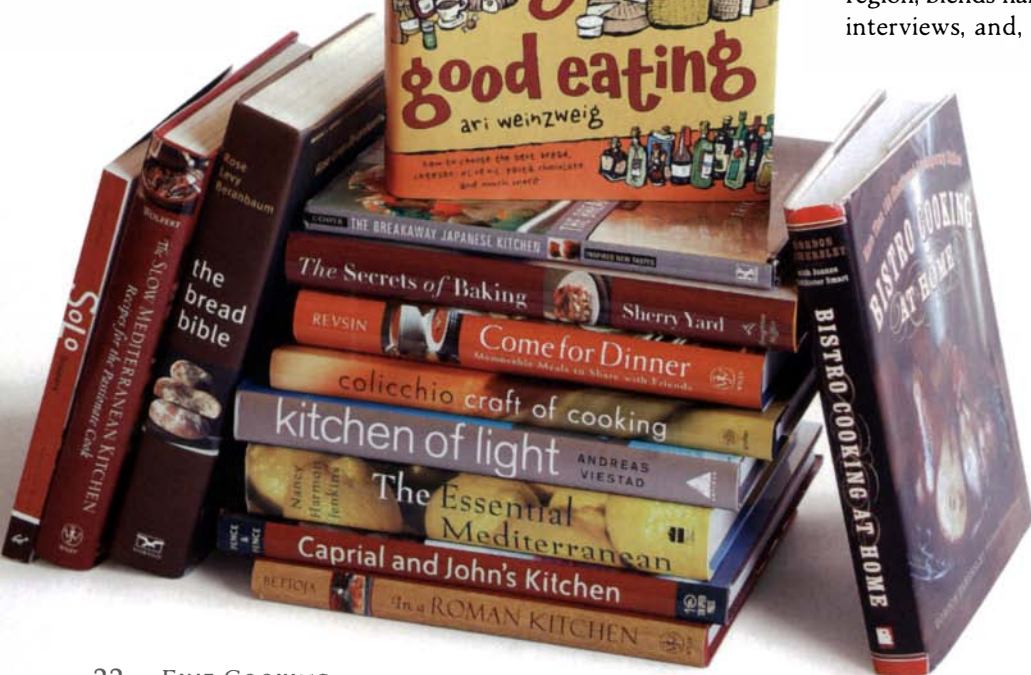
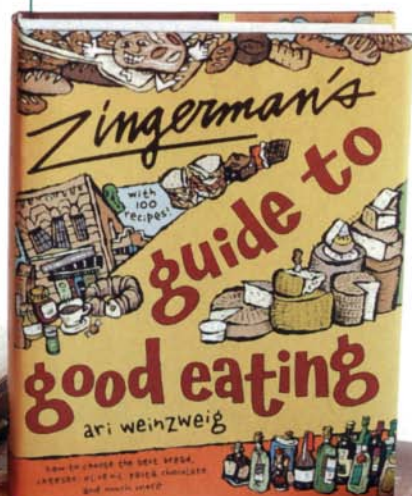
Quick and easy may rule the day even in Rome, but in **The Slow Mediterranean Kitchen** (Wiley, \$34.95), Paula Wolfert celebrates a more leisurely way of cooking. Her carefully written recipes do require patience, effort, and the occasional uncommon ingredient (Wolfert thoughtfully provides mail-order and Internet sources). But anyone craving the unparalleled flavors that slow cooking coaxes from ingredients will be amply rewarded for his or her time.

The Essential Mediterranean (Harper Collins, \$29.95), by Nancy Harmon Jenkins, is a nuanced study of the staple ingredients that unite all Mediterranean cuisines. In each of the ten chapters, Jenkins, who has spent thirty years exploring the region, blends narrative, history, interviews, and, of course, au-

thentic recipes. To watch—and taste—a single dish like red-pepper sauce evolve from rouille to harissa as you circle the sea is truly eye-opening. Recipes cut no corners, but a determined novice could certainly follow Jenkins's detailed instructions.

One of the nicest ways to savor time in the kitchen is with another cook. In **Caprial and John's Kitchen** (Ten Speed Press, \$35), Caprial and John Pence offer fifty menus that divide kitchen duties between two cooks. Who knew restaurant-style teamwork could pan out at home? When my husband and I prepared the menu for Seared Sea Scallops with Herb Crème & Vegetable Hash, I tackled the scallops while he made the hash. The meal came together beautifully, but sharing the book was trying. Ideally, this terrific book would be sold in sets of two.

Meeting a different need, the tempting dishes in **Solo Suppers** (Chronicle, \$19.95), by Joyce Goldstein, are perfect for evenings when you're on your own. How can you not love a book with thoughtful recipes like Creamy Rice Pudding for one, served straight from the pot? Goldstein heaps on shopping advice and tips for turning leftovers into something new. Recipes assume some culinary fluency—a beginner might stumble over a recipe that calls for "4 cups chicken stock reduced to 2 cups"—but, overall, Goldstein's instructions are precise enough for any attentive cook to follow.



Why eat alone when you can invite friends? That's Leslie Revsin's message in *Come for Dinner* (Wiley, \$29.95). With dozens of plan-ahead tips and a whole section of do-ahead dinners, she strips the pressure from cooking for guests. Recipes emphasize ease but never skimp on flavor: It's almost scandalous that a dish as uncomplicated as Vegetables with Ginger Butter should taste so good. And Revsin's Orzo with Roasted Tomatoes & Hot Sausage was quite possibly the tastiest dish I've made this year.

With the warmth of a genial bistro patron, *Bistro Cooking at Home* (Broadway, \$35), by

The recipes emphasize ease but never skimp on flavor.

chef Gordon Hamersley with Joanne McAllister Smart (a former *Fine Cooking* editor), makes adding comfort food à la française to your repertoire feel like the most natural thing in the world. The introduction covers techniques, tools, and bistro staples such as aioli, rouille, and stocks. Ten chapters of mouth-watering photos and classic recipes—Frisée Salad with Lardons & Poached Egg, Coq au Vin—follow. In *Craft of Cooking* (Clarkson Potter, \$37.50), Tom Colicchio offers a sampling of the food from his acclaimed Manhattan restaurant, Craft. Mercifully, he omits celebrity-chef glamour dishes, delivering instead practical tips and 140 gutsy recipes—many with

five ingredients or fewer—for simple, great food.

One of this year's prettiest books, *Kitchen of Light* (Artisan, \$35), by Norwegian food writer Andreas Viestad, evokes the strange magic of Scandinavia. Viestad offers spirited tales of foraging, fishing, and harvesting—plus tempting, well-written recipes. Don't miss the Onion Pie with Jarlsberg & Thyme or the Aquavit Sorbet. Curious cooks will also find surprisingly wonderful flavors in *The Break-away Japanese Kitchen* (Kodansha America, \$27), by Eric Gower, who lived in rural Japan for ten years. His experiments with local staples like shiso leaves, ginger, and sake have led to such pitch-perfect dishes as Udon with Figs & Herbs and Edamame Mint Pesto.

Bakers seeking a true understanding of pastry making will find it in *The Secrets of Baking* (Houghton Mifflin, \$35.95), by Sherry Yard. After five pages of helpful bakeshop rules—roll up your sleeves; stand up straight; sprinkle less-than-perfect desserts with lots of confectioners' sugar—Yard reduces the dessert universe to twelve "mother" recipes. Each introduces a chapter containing its progeny. From chocolate ganache, for example, arises a truffle, a glaze, a mousse, and a soufflé base.

For bread lovers, baking authority Rose Levy Beranbaum's *The Bread Bible* (W. W. Norton, \$35) is here. From the technical opening chapter through 150 meticulous recipes, Beranbaum covers all the bases: from scones, crumpets, and popovers to baguettes, flatbreads, and authentic pumpernickel.

Kimberly Masibay is an associate editor for *Fine Cooking* ♦

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Food Processors

These kitchen workhorses are indispensable for slicing, grating, and making dough

BY MARYELLEN DRISCOLL

If it weren't for my food processor, I might never make a carrot cake. But my handy machine spins out cup after cup of grated carrots in mere seconds. A food processor eliminates the challenge—and sometimes tedium—of thinly slicing cabbage for coleslaw, grating a pound of cheese, and mincing nuts. It's particularly adept at cutting butter into flour for pie crusts and other pastry and at effortlessly kneading bread or pizza dough. For

The champions

These two Cuisinarts proved to be top-notch. In fact, we had a hard time determining which we liked best.

Both are powerhouses, designed to handle the most heavy-duty of processing tasks. They also share other strengths: The feed tube is the largest on the market, large enough to fit a whole apple or tomato. There's a smaller feed tube within the wide one for small items or liquids. Most impressive, the blade brakes within a short moment after releasing the pulse button, giving you the most succinct, pulsated action—ideal for making pastry and for avoiding overprocessing. Both machines have heavy-duty bases, which help prevent creeping.



Cuisinart Prep 11 Plus

Average price: \$200
Bowl capacity: 11 cups

Strengths: In addition to the assets noted at left, this model has a smooth-surface rounded base with touchpad controls that easily wipes clean. The pusher consists of just one unit (no sleeve), and the feed tube is conveniently located at the front of the machine. There's a separate button for mixing dough that adjusts the speed of the blade to ensure proper consistency (although our pizza dough

test couldn't verify that this made a difference).

Shortcomings: The only way to lock and unlock the lid is by lifting the pusher all the way out of the feed tube, so if you want to scrape the bowl, you have to lift the pusher up and set it aside to unlock the lid. This safety feature comes at the expense of simplicity. This model comes with fewer attachments than the Pro-Custom 11 (other disks are available separately; see www.cuisinart.com).



Cuisinart Pro-Custom 11

Average price: \$180
Bowl capacity: 11 cups

Strengths: In addition to the assets noted at left, this traditional model is among the best in its ability to tackle demanding tasks like kneading. The press-lever controls have a pleasant, decisive feel. For around \$20 less than the Prep 11, there are more attachments: a thin slicing disk and a compact cover for jobs that don't require a feed tube.

Shortcomings: The two-part pusher is set at the back of the lid and is unintuitive and clumsy in design—a plastic sleeve fits over the feed tube and the pusher is attached to and lifts up from the sleeve; it does not require, however, that you lift it out of the feed tube every time you lock or unlock the lid as the Prep 11 Plus does.

these and many other tasks, the food processor has established itself as indispensable in the kitchen.

But not all food processors function as well as others, and few good machines come at a small price, so it's important to invest in the right one. To guide your selection, we tested eight standard-size food processors side by side. We found many excellent options among them, the best of which are featured here.

The "best" machine depends on the features you want, the kinds of tasks you'll use it for, and the price you want to pay.

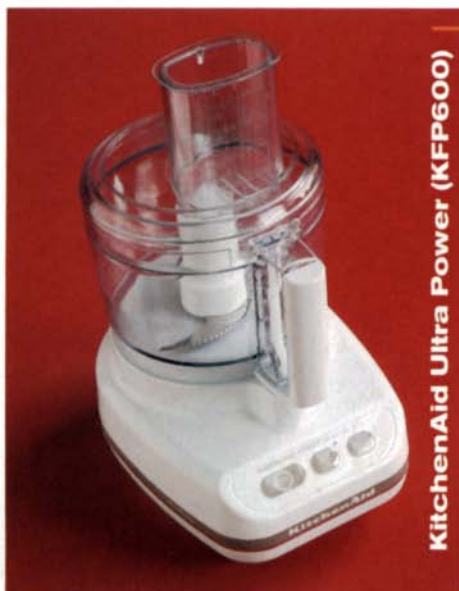
While some of the machines in our tests came with lots of extra attachments (including egg beaters and citrus juicers), we found that the best food processors were just that—choppers, mincers, and graters—and didn't try to take the place of other small appliances.

This model just in

Oster Inspire Food Processor

Oster just introduced its 10-cup Inspire food processor, and we held the presses to test it. At \$80, it seems a great buy, performing consistently well in half a dozen tests. Its design is straightforward and sleek, with a brushed stainless-steel base that's well weighted and easy to clean. It was hard to gauge its relative strength and integrity, however, because it wasn't tested side by side with the other machines.

One that has it all



KitchenAid Ultra Power (KFP600)

Average price: \$200
Bowl capacity: 11 cups

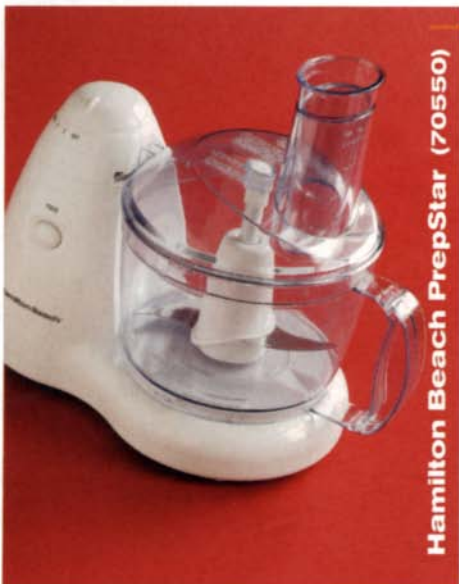
This powerful machine followed right on the heels of the two Cuisinart models. While the blade didn't have the same quick braking action, it stopped spinning relatively promptly.

Strengths: The overall assembly and design are much more straightforward than those of the Cuisinarts, and it comes with the most accessories (see the chart on p. 26). Its heavy-duty

base helps to prevent creeping. It comes with a mini bowl that's terrific for mincing small amounts of garlic and herbs or making a vinaigrette. The smooth control pad easily wipes clean.

Shortcomings: The feed tube isn't as big as the Cuisinarts', although it's ample enough to fit a cucumber or a medium potato. A channel on the underside of the lid traps food and can be hard to clean if washing by hand.

Best buy



Hamilton Beach PrepStar (70550)

Average price: \$37
Bowl capacity: 8 cups

If you're looking for a food processor that can take care of some basic slicing and chopping tasks, this is a bargain. It's not a work-horse, but its slicing, grating, and chopping/mixing actions are relatively swift.

Strengths: This machine has two speeds plus a pulse option. A reversible grating and slicing disk gives you the basics in just

one attachment and fits in the bowl with the chopping blade for convenient storage.

Shortcomings: The work-bowl is relatively small and narrow. The narrow feed tube is limiting (cucumbers and potatoes had to be trimmed to fit). The motor is set off to one side, making this machine a bit of a counter-space hog. The dial control takes some getting used to.

How we tested

The machines on these two pages stood out in our tests as the most versatile of the eight standard full-size food processors (8- to 11-cup capacity) that we tested.

The other food processors in our tests included Black & Decker Power Pro II (FP1500), Bosch (MCM 5000), DeLonghi Cucina, and Krups OptiPro (705-70).

Our tests included:

chopping onions; mincing garlic; pulverizing stale bread into bread-crumbs; grating potatoes, carrots, mozzarella, and Parmesan; slicing cabbage, tomatoes, and cucumbers; and making pizza and pastry doughs. The machines were evaluated for their ease of use, stability during processing, and versatility.

Sources

All the models featured here are nationally available at major retail and cookware stores. Also, Amazon.com carries all of the recommended models except the Hamilton Beach, which is available at KitchenCollection.com.

Food processing tips:

- ❖ To mince garlic evenly in a food processor, drop the cloves through the feed tube while the steel blade is running. Do the same to mince fresh ginger.
- ❖ To get the most uniform pieces of food when chopping:
 - Cut the food into 1-inch pieces.
 - Don't crowd the work bowl—fill it to only one-third to one-half of its capacity.
 - Process with quick on/off pulses.
 - Scrape down the sides of the bowl after every few pulses.
- ❖ To mince nuts without over-processing them into a paste, use the pulse option. Pulsing the nuts with flour or sugar (if part of the recipe) also helps keep them from turning into nut butter.
- ❖ To minimize mashing when grinding meat (like chuck for burgers) freeze the meat until firm before processing.
- ❖ To grate a semisoft cheese, like mozzarella, put the cheese in the freezer to firm it up for 20 to 30 minutes before processing.
- ❖ To grate chocolate without melting it (from the heat produced from processing), freeze the chocolate and use a grating disk. (The steel "S" blade creates pebble-like pieces of chocolate.)
- ❖ To grate a hard cheese like Parmesan, use a fine grating disk. (The steel "S" blade pulverizes it into a pebble-like consistency.)
- ❖ To prevent a gummy consistency when chopping dried fruit, like apricots, partially freeze the fruit before processing and use quick on/off pulses with the steel "S" blade.
- ❖ To clean bread dough and cheese off a food processor blade and bowl, use cold water.

Blade safety

The blades on a food processor are astonishingly sharp. Here are a few safety tips to keep in mind when using your food processor:

- ❖ Always wash the blade after use. Never leave it in the sink or drop it into a sink of sudsy water.
- ❖ If washing your blade in a dishwasher, don't crowd items around it that could shift and conceal the blade. Also, place it out of reach of children and pets.
- ❖ Always hold slicing disks by the rim.

Use a food processor for:

CHOPPING OR MINCING MEDIUM TO LARGE QUANTITIES OF: parsley and other fresh herbs, olives, garlic, and nuts

GRATING: potatoes, carrots, cheese, chocolate

SLICING: potatoes, onions, cabbage, and other vegetables

MAKING: breadcrumbs, bread and pizza dough, pie and other pastry dough, mayonnaise, tapenade, hummus

Use another tool for:

MAKING PESTO: better with a blender









PUREEING: better with a blender or immersion blender

GRINDING SPICES: better with a coffee grinder, spice grinder, or mortar and pestle

UNIFORM CHOPPING: better with a knife

Accessories

This chart identifies which basic attachments come with the top four machines in our tests.

								
steel chopping ("S") blade								
dough blade								
medium (4 mm) slicer								
medium grater								
fine (2 mm) slicer								
fine grater								
mini workbowl and blade								
accessories storage container								
Cuisinart Prep 11 Plus	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Cuisinart Pro-Custom 11	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
KitchenAid Ultra Power	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hamilton Beach PrepStar	✓		✓	✓				

Maryellen Driscoll is Fine Cooking's editor at large. ♦

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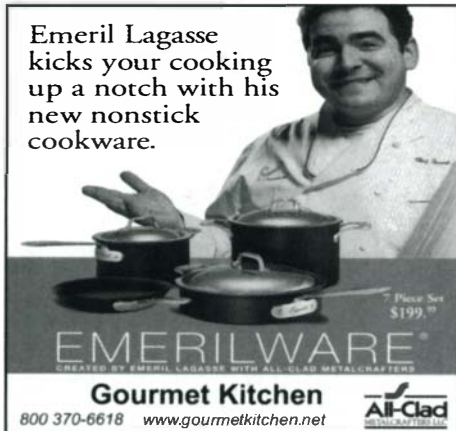
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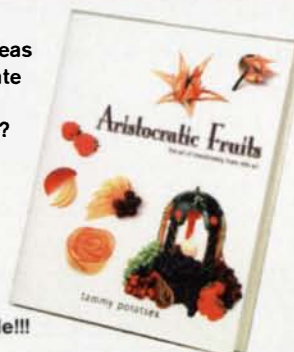
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Small, Sleek & Efficient

BY AMY ALBERT

Dave McElroy is an ambitious home cook who loves to entertain. At his place, giving a dinner party often means “crowding twelve people around the dining room table of my San Francisco apartment” while he serves lots of little courses with different wines. In most small kitchens, and even in many big ones, this could be a nightmare, and the host might be completely separated from the guests. But thanks to the smart design of this 8x10-foot space, big doings in a small kitchen are relaxed and convivial.



Opting for a 30-inch range (instead of a wider one) made room for both counter space and good-size cabinets on each side of the stove. The counter to the right of the stove juts into the dining room entryway, and it does double duty as a workspace and as a landing for glasses, utensils, and dishes ready to be brought to the table. “This layout lets me stay in the conversation the entire time I’m cooking,” says Dave.

Custom storage helps make a small kitchen organized and uncluttered



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Sliding shelves that are built on two levels make the most of corner space.



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There wasn't room for two sinks in this kitchen, but installing one spacious, deep one with a rack makes the sink a more versatile workspace.



A stow-away cutting board provides extra prep space before a dinner party and is sturdy enough to hold lots of plates when the shindig is in full swing.



With an 8-foot counter, Dave turned a narrow hallway into an efficient work and storage space. It's the perfect place to roll dough, to assemble salads, or to "put a few friends to work alongside me."



Amy Albert is Fine Cooking's senior editor. ♦

Holiday wish list

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For the wine aficionado

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5 Meaty Mistakes

BY SHIRLEY O. CORRIHER

Cooking meat and poultry perfectly is tricky business. And once you've erred, you're stuck—not much can fix a tough burger or dry chicken breast. The secret is to prevent mistakes in the first place all along the way, from the market to the carving platter, and a little science savvy can help. Below are five common blunders, plus my tips for avoiding them.

1 Making burgers with ground sirloin

might seem like a good idea. After all, sirloin steak is famously tender. And ground sirloin's high price suggests that it's somehow superior to cheaper ground chuck. But when it comes to burgers, ground chuck is better.

A hamburger's flavor depends on two things: the flavor of the ground meat and the amount of fat in it. In both flavor and fat content, ground sirloin is lacking compared to ground chuck. Sirloin comes from a little-used muscle, so it's very tender but not very beefy tasting. Chuck, on the other hand, comes from the cow's heavily used shoulder muscles and has lots of flavor. And ground chuck has adequate fat, which melts during cooking for a burger that's succulent and delicious, even when cooked to medium well. Lean ground sirloin doesn't have enough fat to keep a burger juicy when cooked through.

2 Carving ham into thick slices

is a common enough practice—so how is it a blunder? Because ham tastes even better when sliced thin. A thick ham slice has much less exposed surface for a given weight than the same amount of thinly sliced ham. The extra surface allows the taste receptors in your mouth to contact more of the ham's flavor components. There are also more surfaces exposed to air, which may help disperse the ham's aroma, and what you smell has a lot to do with what you taste.

3 Overcooking meat in stir-fries and sautés

is easy to do. Meat stores heat energy and after it's removed from the heat source, it continues to conduct heat from the exterior toward the center. This carryover cooking can raise the meat's temperature by 5° to 10°F depending on its size and density. The larger and denser the meat, the longer the cooking continues, and the higher the temperature can go. In stir-fries, the pieces of meat are small and the cooking time is brief, so it's easy to miss the window for perfect doneness. To avoid overcooking, pay close attention and remove the meat from the pan before it's as done as you want it: I take chicken out of the pan when it's still slightly pink in the center, beef when it's still a little red, and pork when it's just barely pink.

4 Frying bacon over high heat

causes grease to splatter all over your stovetop, and the heat can lead to the formation of dangerous compounds. Most bacon is cured with a liquid brine that contains a very small amount of sodium nitrite (less than 40 parts per million). This preservative contributes to bacon's color and flavor and inhibits the growth of *Clostridium botulinum*, the bacterium that causes botulism.

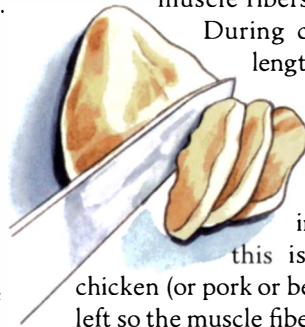
Since the late 1950s, numerous researchers have shown that nitrites can react with amino acids (the building blocks of proteins) to form nitrosamines, a known carcinogen in animals. This nitrite-to-nitrosamine reaction can be exacerbated by high heat—an excellent reason to cook bacon at moderate temperatures.

Besides, lowering the cooking temperature drives moisture—which explodes in hot grease—more slowly from the bacon. Start the bacon in a cold pan set over medium low, and you'll get a nice steady sizzle in the pan instead of splatter on your stove.

5 Cutting raw chicken breast with the grain

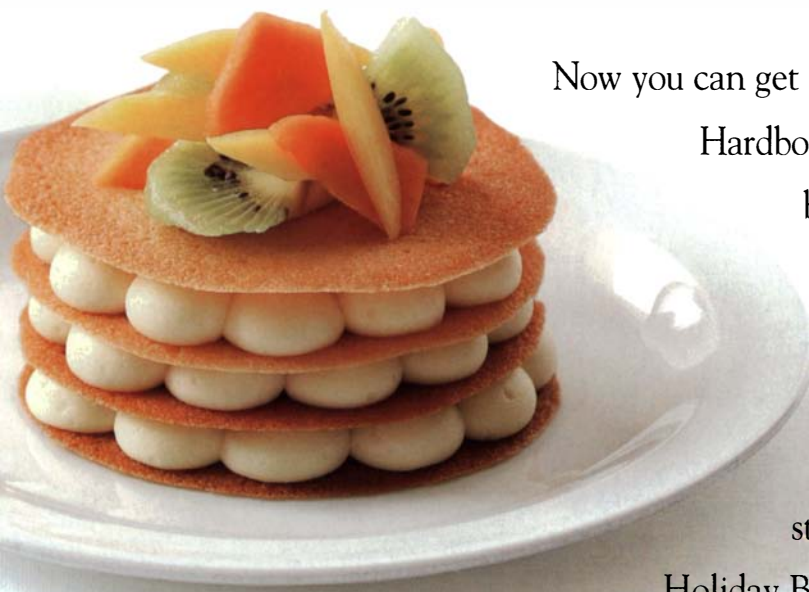
before stir-frying or sautéing results in tough, wrinkled wads of cooked meat instead of nice flat pieces. In poultry, bundles of muscle fibers run the length of the breast.

During cooking, muscle fibers shrink lengthwise. If you slice the raw meat with the grain (parallel to the fibers), the fibers will contract along their entire length as they cook, shriveling the meat into tough chunks. Preventing this is easy: simply slice the raw chicken (or pork or beef) across the grain as shown at left so the muscle fibers in each piece are short—just the thickness of the slice. While the slices might shrink slightly in thickness as they cook, the meat will remain nice and flat, and your stir-fry will be masterful—if you don't overcook it (see #3 above).



Food scientist Shirley O. Corriher, a contributing editor to Fine Cooking, is the author of CookWise. ♦

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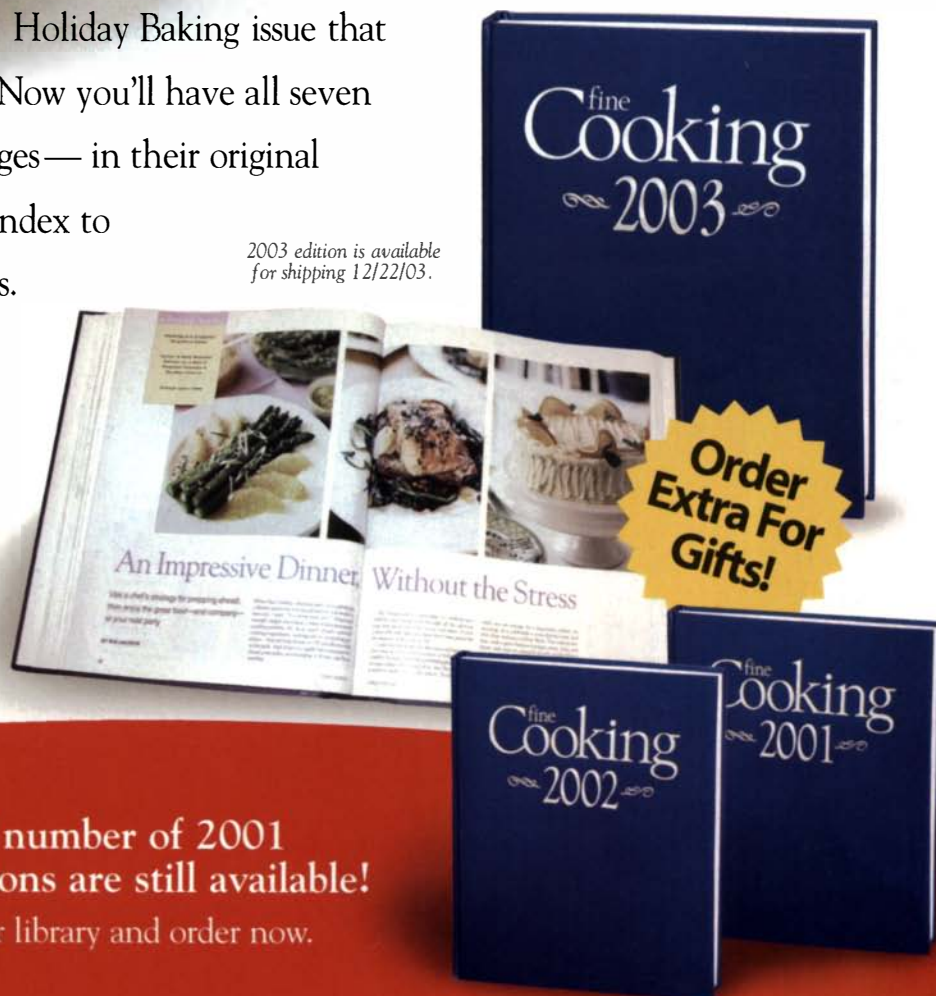
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WINNING TIP

An unconventional batter-mixing tool

When making a marble cake, I swirl the chocolate and vanilla batters together with the tip of a knitting needle. Because of its sleek, symmetrical shape, the needle maneuvers neatly through the batter, letting me make beautiful, tight spiral patterns that would be impossible with a spatula or knife.

—Pat Barni,
Mayfield Village, Ohio

A prize for the best tip

Attention clever cooks: We want your best tips—we'll pay for the ones we publish—and we'll give a prize (see below) to the cleverest tip in each issue. Write to Tips, *Fine Cooking*, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506 or send email to fc@taunton.com.



The prize: An Oxo salad spinner "gift basket" filled with a Kyocera ceramic fruit and vegetable slicer, a Zyliss ergonomic swivel peeler, a Messermeister heavy-duty garlic/ginger press, a Microplane zester/grater with handle, a 14-inch WMF ball whisk, and a Kuhn Rikon safety lid lifter. Value: \$125.

Bathe garlic to avoid the sticky mess

We use a lot of garlic at my small delicatessen on the Olympic Peninsula of Washington, and peeling it can be a chore. But I can't see buying peeled cloves when our local farmers grow so many great varieties. Fortunately, I've found a way to peel lots of garlic without making a sticky mess of my hands: I separate the cloves from the head, cut off the root ends, and loosen the skin of each clove by smashing it with the flat side of a chef's knife. Then I put all the cloves in a big bowl of cold water and slip them out of their skins. When you remove the cloves from the water, you'll find that your hands are no longer sticky.

—Hope Porsato,
Nordland, Washington

Unclutter your kitchen with bamboo steamers

I use bamboo steamers to store items that normally sit out on the counter and take up a lot of precious space. I put tomatoes,

peaches, pears, and other fruits that need to ripen at room temperature in one section. In another, I put garlic, onions, and ginger—and so on. Since the steamer sections stack vertically, they take up very little space on the countertop.

—Drew McLaughlin,
Shoreview, Minnesota

Melt-in-your-mouth meatballs

For extra-tender meatballs, try soaking breadcrumbs in lukewarm water until thoroughly moist. Squeeze out the excess water before kneading the crumbs into your ground meat.

—Irene Moretti,
Ridgeville, Ontario

Perfectly cooked rice on an electric stove

I don't own a rice cooker, but I've never had trouble cooking rice in a pot on a gas stove. But when I moved to a place with an electric stove, I had to get creative. I was about to give up and buy a rice cooker (my Indian mother would

not approve) when I thought of this method. I turn on two burners: one on high; the other on low. I start the rice and water on the hotter burner. When the water starts to boil, I immediately move the pot to the burner set on low. This simulates the quick temperature change you can achieve with a gas range, and now I make perfect rice again.

—Indrani Gardella,
Los Altos, California

"Butter" bread with mayo for fast grilled cheese

My neighbor created this simple shortcut for preparing grilled cheese sandwiches. When everyone's starving and in a hurry to eat—and the butter is cold and rock-hard—we spread both faces of the sandwich with the thinnest coating of mayonnaise instead. Our sandwiches grill up beautifully. In fact, they're as toasty and delicious as the ones in Laura Werlin's article (*Fine Cooking* #57), and they're not at all greasy.

—Rosanne Aresty,
Mamaroneck, New York

Freeze cabbage for stuffing

To save time when making stuffed cabbage, I freeze and thaw the head of cabbage beforehand instead of parboiling it. The thawed leaves are very pliable and taste no different than before.

—Cheryl Musinski,
Agawam, Massachusetts

Pepper as memory aid

If you tend to forget whether you've salted the pot of water for boiling pasta or vegetables, add a pinch of pepper to the water along with the salt. Pepper is easily visible in the water so you will always know if you've seasoned the water or not.

—Pamela Reznick,
Somers, New York ♦

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READER SERVICE NO. 6

BY ABIGAIL JOHNSON DODGE

start your party with

Savory Coins

Bake tasty rosemary, Cheddar, or sesame
hors d'oeuvres to nibble with drinks, from an
easy slice-and-bake dough



These hors d'oeuvres always get gobbled up when I make them for parties, with everyone asking for the recipe. I think it's because they're a great example of just the right thing at the right time: tender, savory cookies (I call them coins) that are the perfect nibble to go with a glass of Champagne, sparkling cider, or any other cocktail. They're a great way to say "welcome" when guests arrive at your party.

Making these tidbits is as easy as spinning cold butter and dry ingredients in a food processor. After that, you give the dough a quick knead on the counter with a pushing, smearing action that the French call *fraisage*. You then shape the dough into a log, and you're done. Whenever you're ready to bake, just slice the log into rounds.

As you'll see from the recipes that follow, I stick to strong and assertive flavors—Cheddar-Cayenne, Sesame, and Rosemary-Parmesan—to make these small bites truly irresistible. I also keep a log of dough stashed in the freezer at all times, as these coins are a boon if you suddenly realize you need something to serve with drinks.

You'll be prepared for impromptu entertaining with dough or baked coins in the freezer



Mix the dough ahead and shape it into a log. It lasts for two days in the refrigerator and for one month in the freezer (thaw it on the counter or overnight in the refrigerator).

Cheddar-Cayenne Coins

*Yields about 4 dozen
1½-inch coins.*

These are fairly spicy, so use the smaller amount of cayenne if you want a milder kick. Pecans or pine nuts would work in place of the walnuts.

6 ounces (1⅓ cups) all-purpose flour
3 ounces (about 1¼ cups) finely shredded sharp Cheddar (or half Cheddar and half Parmigiano Reggiano)
1 teaspoon table salt
⅛ to ¼ teaspoon cayenne
4 ounces (½ cup) unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces, chilled
1 large egg yolk
2 tablespoons water
1½ ounces (1⅓ cups) medium finely chopped walnuts
Kosher salt for sprinkling (optional)

Combine the flour, cheese, salt, and cayenne in a food processor. Process until just blended. Add the butter pieces and pulse until the dough resembles coarse crumbs. Stir the yolk and water together with a fork and drizzle over the mixture. Pulse until the dough begins to form small moist crumbs. Add the chopped nuts and pulse briefly until the crumbs begin to come together.

Pile the moist crumbs on an unfloured work surface. With the heel of your hand,

push and gently smear the crumbs away from you until they start to come together in a cohesive dough. Using a pastry scraper or a metal spatula, lift up one edge of the dough and fold it into the center (the dough will still be rough, so don't expect a neat, smooth fold). Repeat with the opposite edge, like folding a letter. Turn the dough 45 degrees. Give the dough another smearing and shape it into a 14-inch log that's 1¼ inches in diameter. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate until firm, about 4 hours, or up to two days. (The dough may also be frozen for up to a month and then thawed for about an hour on the counter or in the refrigerator overnight.)

Heat the oven to 375°F. Line two large baking sheets with parchment. Using a thin, sharp knife, cut the log into scant ¼-inch slices. Arrange about ½ inch apart on the prepared sheets. Bake until medium to deep golden around the edges, 15 to 20 minutes, rotating the sheets as needed for even baking. If you like, sprinkle the crackers with a little kosher salt just as the baking sheets come out of the oven. Set the sheets on racks to cool. When the coins are completely cool, store them in an airtight container.



Or bake the coins ahead, wrap short stacks in plastic, pack the stacks in plastic containers, and stash them in the freezer. Thaw at room temperature (or put the frozen coins right in the oven) and warm them for a few minutes at 325°F to refresh them.

Rosemary-Parmesan Coins

*Yields about 4 dozen
1½-inch coins.*

6 ounces (1⅓ cups)
all-purpose flour
**1 ounce (¾ cup lightly
packed)** freshly finely
grated Parmigiano
Reggiano
1 generous tablespoon
finely grated lemon zest
(from 1 to 2 lemons)
**2½ teaspoons coarsely
chopped fresh rosemary**
1 teaspoon table salt
**¼ teaspoon coarsely
ground black pepper**
**4 ounces (½ cup) unsalted
butter, cut into ½-inch
pieces, chilled**
1 large egg yolk
**2 tablespoons fresh lemon
juice**
**Kosher salt for sprinkling
(optional)**

Combine the flour, cheese, lemon zest, rosemary, salt, and pepper in a food processor. Process until just blended. Add the butter pieces and pulse until the dough resembles coarse crumbs. Stir the yolk and lemon juice together with a fork and drizzle over the mixture. Pulse until the dough begins to form small, moist crumbs that just begin to clump together.

Pile the moist crumbs on an unfloured work surface. With the heel of your hand, push and gently smear the crumbs away from you until they start to come together in a cohesive dough. Using a pastry scraper or a metal spatula, lift up one edge of the dough and fold it into the center (the dough will still be rough, so don't expect a neat, smooth fold). Repeat with the opposite edge, like folding a letter. Turn the dough 45 degrees. Give the dough another



smearing and shape it into a 14-inch log that's 1¼ inches in diameter. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate until firm, about 4 hours, or up to two days. (The dough may also be frozen for up to a month and then thawed on the counter for about an hour or in the refrigerator overnight.)

Heat the oven to 375°F. Line two large baking sheets with parchment. Using a thin, sharp knife, cut the log into ¼-inch slices. Arrange about ½ inch apart on the prepared sheets. Bake until medium golden around the edges, 15 to 20 minutes, rotating the sheets as needed for even baking. (Don't overbake or you'll lose the lemon and rosemary flavors.) If you like, sprinkle the crackers with a little kosher salt just as the baking sheets come out of the oven. Set the sheets on racks to cool. When the coins are completely cool, store in an airtight container.

reader review

A Fine Cooking reader gave this recipe a real-world test. Here are the results:

"These were full of flavor and super easy to make—I had rosemary, Parmesan, and lemons on hand, so I didn't even need to shop before cooking. I'll definitely serve these at my next cocktail party as a lighter alternative to cheese and crackers."

—Diana Pittet,
New York, New York

Here's an easy way to cut chilled butter: Quarter the sticks lengthwise and then slice them into small squares.

Sesame Coins

*Yields about 3 dozen
1½-inch coins.*

5¾ ounces (1¼ cups)
all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon table salt
**¼ teaspoon coarsely
ground black pepper**
**4 ounces (½ cup) unsalted
butter, cut into ½-inch
pieces, chilled**
1 large egg yolk
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
**2 tablespoons sesame
seeds, toasted**
**Kosher salt for sprinkling
(optional)**

Combine the flour, salt, and pepper in a food processor. Process until just blended. Add the butter pieces and pulse until the dough resembles coarse crumbs. Stir the yolk and mustard together with a fork and drizzle over the flour mixture. Pulse until the dough begins to form moist crumbs that are just beginning to clump together. Add the sesame seeds and pulse very briefly (just two or three quick pulses will do the trick; any more and the seeds will break down too much).

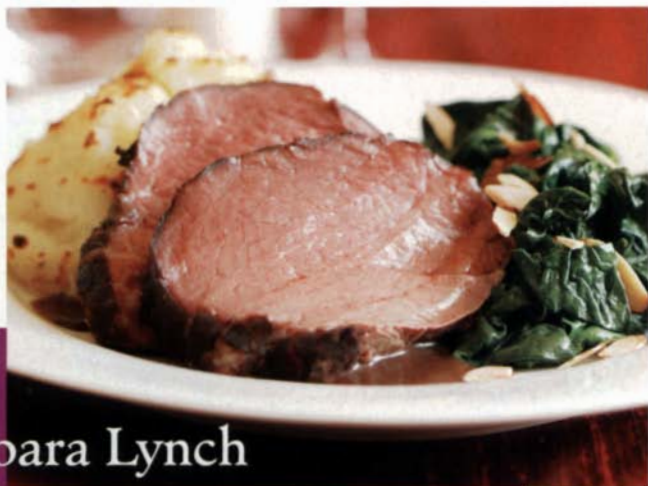
Pile the moist crumbs on an unfloured work surface. With the heel of your hand, push and gently smear the crumbs away from you until they start to come together in a cohesive dough. Using a pastry scraper or a metal

spatula, lift up one edge of the dough and fold it into the center (the dough will still be rough, so don't expect a neat, smooth fold). Repeat with the opposite edge, like folding a letter. Turn the dough 45 degrees. Give the dough another smearing and shape it into a 12-inch log that's 1¼ inches in diameter. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate until firm, about 4 hours, or up to two days. (The dough may also be frozen for up to a month and then thawed on the counter for about an hour or in the refrigerator overnight.)

Heat the oven to 375°F. Line two large baking sheets with parchment. Using a thin, sharp knife, cut the log into ¼-inch slices. Arrange about ½ inch apart on the prepared sheets. Bake until medium golden around the edges and on the bottom, 14 to 17 minutes, rotating the sheets as needed for even baking. If you like, sprinkle the crackers with a little kosher salt just as the baking sheets come out of the oven. Set the sheets on racks to cool. When the coins are completely cool, store them in an airtight container.

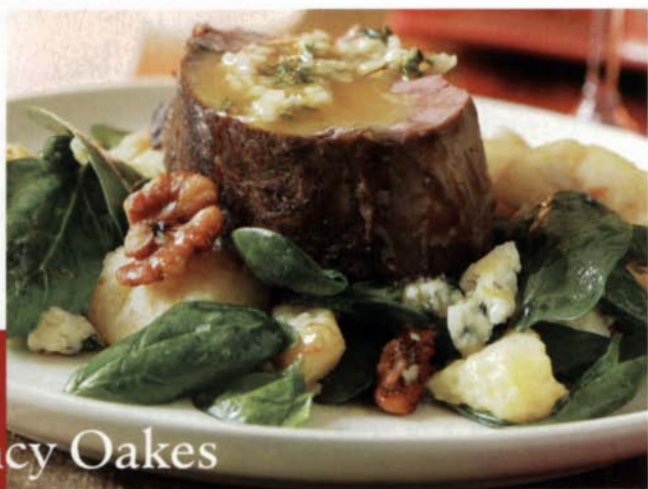
Abby Dodge, a contributing editor to Fine Cooking, is working on her next cookbook, *The Weekend Baker*. ♦

Two New Ways to Roast Tenderloin



Barbara Lynch

SLOW ROASTING the tenderloin leaves me plenty of time to work on the accompanying side dishes: a rich red wine sauce, creamed spinach amandine, and potatoes mousseline.



Nancy Oakes

SALT CRUSTING gives the beef a wonderful savory flavor, and the moist cooking keeps it juicy. It's also a dramatic presentation for a special meal.

Two chefs pick different methods to prepare this elegant cut of beef for a festive holiday meal

BY TONY ROSENFELD

Perhaps due to its expense, beef tenderloin can be intimidating to prepare. Choosing the right accompaniments, cooking the meat perfectly, and timing it all for guests—it's enough to make even the most seasoned cook anxious, especially around the holidays. Since restaurant chefs deal with these sorts of worries daily, if not hourly, we put the challenge to them. We asked Nancy Oakes from San Francisco's Boulevard and Barbara Lynch from Boston's No. 9 Park to create a dish with beef tenderloin as its centerpiece and potatoes, shallots, and spinach as sides. We got back two very different but equally stunning preparations—Oakes roasted a center cut of tenderloin in a salt crust, while Lynch favored a low-heat, slow-cooked approach—and both offered lots of practical tips for bringing together the whole dinner without a hitch.

Rules of the game

In creating their menus, the chefs had to follow a few rules for this challenge:

- ❖ Beef tenderloin was a required element, but they could drop one of the three vegetables: spinach, shallots, or potatoes.
- ❖ They could use basic pantry ingredients in any amount: butter, vegetable oil, olive oil, milk, cream, eggs, flour, garlic, onions, mustard, pepper, salt, stock or broth (beef, chicken, or vegetable), sugar, vinegar, water, and wine.
- ❖ They could use up to three wildcard ingredients, including any condiment, flavoring, fruit, herb, spice, starch, or vegetable.

Barbara Lynch slow-roasts a whole tenderloin

Beef tenderloin is one of my favorite cuts of beef—I love its buttery texture. For this menu, I've chosen to roast it at a very low temperature—a simple approach that cooks the meat slowly and evenly. This leaves me plenty of time to work on the accompanying sides: a rich red wine sauce, creamed spinach amandine, and potatoes mousseline. The mousseline is just a fancy name for mashed potatoes with whipped cream folded in to lighten them. I spread the potatoes in a baking dish and flash them under the broiler just before serving to brown the top. To fill out the meal, I sauté the spinach and add some cream and a garnish of toasted almond slices and almond oil, my final wildcards.

Slow-Roasted Beef Tenderloin with Thyme

Serves six to eight.

1 whole beef tenderloin (about 6 pounds), trimmed of the chain and of excess fat and sinew (see p. 71)

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

About 25 sprigs fresh thyme

Heat the oven to 250°F. Season the beef generously with salt and pepper. Fold the thin tail piece under itself to create a roast of even thickness. Using twine, tie the beef at regular intervals to help it hold its shape during cooking. Tuck the thyme beneath the twine all the way around the beef, spacing the sprigs about 2 inches apart. Put the beef in a roasting pan and roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part reads 130°F for medium rare, 1¾ to 2 hours. Transfer to a carving board, tent with foil, and let rest for 30 minutes. Just before serving, carve into ½-inch slices.

Red Wine Sauce

Serves six to eight.

5 tablespoons unsalted butter
6 medium shallots, thinly sliced (about ⅔ cup)

2 cups full-bodied dry red wine (like a Merlot)

2 tablespoons red-wine vinegar
5 sprigs fresh thyme

4 cups low-salt canned beef broth

Melt 2 tablespoons of the butter in a large sauté pan over medium-low heat. Cook the shallots, stirring occasionally, until they're soft and translucent, 10 to 12 minutes. Turn the heat to high, add the wine and vinegar, and boil until reduced to a syrupy consistency (about ¼ cup), about 10 minutes. Add the thyme and the beef broth and reduce to 1 cup, about 20 minutes. Strain the sauce, let cool, cover, and refrigerate.

Just before serving, reheat the sauce in a saucepan over medium heat. When it's hot, whisk in the remaining 3 tablespoons butter.

This luxurious meal has a few last-minute steps, but if you follow the timeline at right, you'll still be able to mingle with your guests.

Potatoes Mousseline

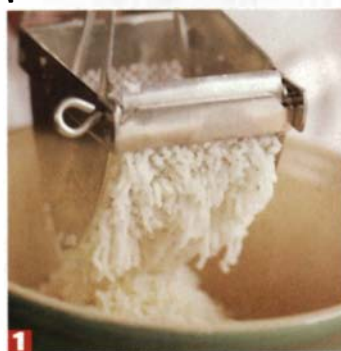
Serves six to eight.

½ cup unsalted butter, melted
3 pounds russet potatoes,
peeled and cut into
lengthwise quarters
Kosher salt
¾ cup whole milk
1 cup heavy cream, whipped
to soft peaks
Freshly ground black pepper

Brush a 9x13-inch baking dish with some of the melted butter. Put the potatoes in a large saucepan and cover with cold water by at least 1 inch. Add 2 teaspoons salt, cover, and bring to a boil over high heat. Lower the heat to maintain a gentle boil, cover the pan partially, and cook until the potatoes are quite tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Drain and return the potatoes to the pan. Over low heat, shake the pan until the potatoes are dry and no longer steam profusely, about 2 minutes. Pass the potatoes through a ricer **1** (or force through a coarse sieve with a rubber spatula) into a large bowl. Stir in the milk and half of the melted butter with a wooden spoon. Whisk the whipped cream a few times to fluff it up and then gently stir about one-third of it into the potato mixture to lighten it with the whisk. Using a rubber spatula, fold in the rest of the whipped cream **2**. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer the potatoes to the baking dish. Spread evenly, drizzle with the remaining butter, and refrigerate.

To reheat the mousseline, bring the potatoes to room temperature. When the beef is resting, put the potatoes in the 250°F oven for 30 minutes to rewarm. Just before serving, heat the broiler to high and broil the potatoes until lightly browned, 2 to 4 minutes **3**.

Making a light, silky potatoes mousseline



Creamed Spinach Amandine

Serves six to eight.

20 ounces fresh spinach,
stemmed, washed, and
drained (about 8 cups, loosely
packed)
½ cup heavy cream
Kosher salt and freshly ground
black pepper
½ cup sliced almonds, toasted
until lightly golden
½ tablespoon almond oil (or
walnut or hazelnut oil)

Heat a large nonstick pan over medium heat. Add a large handful of spinach, and as it wilts and makes room in the pan, add more spinach. When it's all wilted, pour off any liquid in the pan, add the heavy cream, and season with salt and pepper. Keep on low heat until serving.

To serve, sprinkle each portion of spinach with the toasted almonds and drizzle with the nut oil.

Barbara's timeline

Up to two days ahead:

Make the red wine sauce.

In the morning:

Clean and stem the spinach.

Toast the almonds.

Make the potatoes mousseline, spread in a baking dish, and refrigerate.

Two and a half hours before serving:

Put the beef tenderloin in the oven.

An hour ahead:

Take the potatoes mousseline out of the fridge. When the beef comes out of the oven, put in the potatoes.

Just before serving:

Cook the spinach.

Reheat the red wine sauce.

Broil the potatoes.

Slice the beef.

Barbara Lynch is the owner and executive chef of No. 9 Park in Boston.



Nancy Oakes roasts a center cut in a salt crust

When you serve beef tenderloin as the centerpiece of a dinner party, you're definitely making the statement, "This is special." Roasting the tenderloin in a salt crust builds on this feeling.

For this menu, I chose the center cut (sometimes called the *châteaubriand*), whose incredible tenderness and delicate flavor make it the prized part of the tenderloin. The diameter of this cut is also consistent from end to end, ensuring even cooking. Be sure that the tenderloin is at least 3 inches in diameter; if it's any smaller it will cook too quickly in the salt crust.

I used the potatoes, shallots, and spinach to make a warm potato salad, adding three wildcard ingredients as well: fresh thyme, Gorgonzola, and toasted walnuts. A shallot and mustard vinaigrette coats the salad and serves as a sauce for the beef.

My recipes are for four; for a larger crowd, just double them, but be sure to cook two 2-pound pieces of beef instead of one large tenderloin.

Beef Tenderloin Roasted in a Salt Crust

Serves four.

FOR THE SALT CRUST:

2 cups kosher or sea salt

3 large egg whites

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup water

2 to 3 cups all-purpose flour

FOR THE BEEF:

**2-pound well-trimmed,
center-cut beef tenderloin
(at least 3 inches in diameter)**

Kosher salt or sea salt and

freshly ground black pepper

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup unsalted butter

**2 tablespoons extra-virgin
olive oil**

1 large egg yolk

Make the salt crust: In a stand mixer (use the paddle attachment) or in a large bowl, combine the salt, egg whites, and water. On medium speed or with a wooden spoon, mix in the flour a little at a time until the dough is firm and feels slightly dry and stiff, like Play-Doh **1**, 2 to 3 min-

utes in a mixer. Without a mixer, you'll need to knead the dough by hand. The dough shouldn't be moist or sticky, and you might not need all 3 cups flour. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let rest at room temperature for 2 hours. If making ahead, refrigerate for up to 24 hours.

Prepare the beef: If the salt crust has been refrigerated, bring it to room temperature. Heat the oven to 400°F. Pat the beef dry with paper towels and season it lightly with salt and pepper. Heat the butter and oil in a heavy skillet over medium-high heat. When the butter has melted and is starting to bubble, add the beef. Sear it until browned on all sides, basting with the butter and oil mixture in the pan, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate. Discard the excess fat in the skillet.

In a small bowl, beat the egg yolk with 2 tablespoons water and set aside.

Lightly flour a work surface. Roll out the salt crust dough into



Making the salt crust is easier than you might think. You simply mix salt, egg whites, flour, and water until they come together in a dough.

Making a salt crust for beef



a rectangle large enough to easily wrap and enclose the beef without stretching or tearing the dough. Set the beef on the dough and lift up each side to enclose the beef as if you're folding an envelope **2**. Press the seams together and transfer to a heavy baking sheet (a large, flat metal spatula works well for the transfer). If the dough cracks or tears, patch it with a piece of dough pinched from a thicker area. Brush the entire surface of the dough with the egg yolk glaze and sprinkle with a little salt.

Roast on a center rack until an instant-read thermometer inserted through the crust and into the center of the meat registers 125°F for medium rare, 25 to 28 minutes; check early to avoid overcooking. (For rare, cook the beef to 120°F; for medium, cook to 130°F. The temperature will rise a few degrees while the meat rests.) Let rest for 30 minutes in the crust.

To serve: Set a mound of the warm potato salad (see the recipe at right) on each plate. Using a paring knife, cut off the top of the salt crust **3**. (You can do this at the table for more drama.) With a fork, gently lift out the beef and set it on a carving board. Slice into four pieces. Set a portion of beef on the potato salad. Spoon some of the vinaigrette over the beef and sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Warm Potato Salad with Gorgonzola, Baby Spinach & Walnuts

Serves four.

FOR THE POTATOES:

6 medium Yukon Gold potatoes
(about 2 pounds total)

FOR THE VINAIGRETTE:

1½ cups plus 2 tablespoons
extra-virgin olive oil
¼ cup finely diced shallots
(about 6)
¼ cup Champagne vinegar
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
¼ cup fresh thyme leaves
Kosher salt and freshly ground
black pepper

FOR SERVING:

1 cup walnut halves, toasted
6 ounces Gorgonzola, rind
removed, cheese broken
into chunks
3 cups lightly packed baby
spinach (4¼ ounces), washed
and spun dry

Roast the potatoes: Heat the oven to 400°F. Put the potatoes on a baking sheet and roast until tender when pierced with a fork, about 1 hour. Let cool, peel, and break into 1- to 2-inch chunks. Put them on the baking sheet and set aside.

Make the vinaigrette: Heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil in a sauté pan over medium heat. Add the shallots and sauté until softened, about 1 minute. Whisk the vinegar and mustard in a medium bowl. Whisk in the remaining 1½ cups oil. Add the sautéed shallots and their oil, along with the thyme. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Fifteen minutes before serving: Heat the oven to 375°F. Put the walnuts on the baking sheet with the potatoes; warm in the oven until the potatoes are hot, about 10 minutes. Put the potatoes and walnuts in a large bowl. Stir the vinaigrette; pour 1 cup of it over the potatoes and walnuts (save the rest to drizzle over the beef). Let sit for a couple of minutes. At the very last minute, add the Gorgonzola and spinach. Toss well but gently; don't mash.

Nancy's timeline

Up to a day ahead:

Make the salt crust.

Up to four hours ahead:

Roast the potatoes.

Make the vinaigrette.

Toast the walnuts.

Crumble the Gorgonzola.

Wash the spinach.

One and a half hours before serving:

Sear the beef, wrap it in the salt crust, and roast.

Fifteen minutes before serving:

Warm the potatoes and walnuts.

Just before serving:

Assemble, toss, and plate the potato salad.

Remove the beef from the salt crust; slice and plate it.

Nancy Oakes is the chef of Boulevard in San Francisco. ♦

Fast, Flavorful Vegetable Sautés

These side dishes are simple enough to make with a weeknight steak or chop, yet equally impressive with a special-occasion roast

BY MARYELLEN DRISCOLL

When I'm looking for a vegetable side dish that's really flavorful yet simple enough to pull together on a weeknight, I make one of these sautés. They're straightforward—requiring just one pan and cooking in less than 10 minutes—yet a little special with a flavorful mix of vegetables. This makes them terrific companions to weeknight chicken or a seared steak but equally exceptional to serve to guests, say alongside a roast. They're also substantial enough that you could serve them as a main course over a starch, such as polenta, pasta, or rice.

For depth of flavor, use a mix of vegetables and stir less for better browning. I like to use at least three types of vegetable in these sautés, including some kind of onion in the mix for the sweet flavor it contributes.

With these sautés, it pays to be hands-off. The less disruption, the better the vegetables can brown, resulting in greater depth of flavor. In fact, the most important step is to let the vegetables sit, undisturbed, for about two minutes after adding them to the hot oil. This guarantees you a start on the nutty sweetness that you get with browning. You'll

be amazed by the flavor development—even bitter radicchio becomes pleasantly nutty.

Sauté over medium-high heat but reduce the heat if your pan gets too browned. The best way to read your heat is by the discoloration of the pan's bottom. You want it to brown (see the photo at far right) but not blacken, so adjust the heat as needed.

With these recipes you end up with a relatively crowded pan, which can create some steam cooking. That's fine. Steam can't hurt as long as the heat is still high enough for some flavorful browning to take place, too.

Add the vegetables in the order they'll take to cook. Vegetables that need time to cook through, like cauliflower, go in the pan first, while leafy greens like spinach and arugula don't get sautéed at all but are tossed in at the end, wilting under the heat of the other vegetables.

I wait until the vegetables are just about done to add any garlic so it softens but doesn't lose its flavor. Fresh herbs go in at the end of cooking. Final additions—fresh ginger, soppressata crisps, Parmesan shavings, or a squirt of lemon juice—give each dish that little extra zing.



Three tips for getting



Build flavor at the get-go: Get a head start on flavor by putting the vegetables in a hot pan and letting them sit undisturbed for the first two or three minutes so that they begin to brown.



Green Beans & Radicchio with Shaved Parmesan

Serves four.

Peppery radicchio takes on a pleasant, nutty flavor when browned. If you can't find slender green beans, cook bigger ones for an extra 2 minutes before adding the radicchio. Use a sharp vegetable peeler to make shavings of Parmigiano.

2½ tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

12 ounces slender green beans, ends trimmed, long beans snapped in half

1 medium yellow onion, halved and thinly sliced

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

3 cups ½-inch strips radicchio (about 6 ounces)

1 large clove garlic, minced

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

Shavings of Parmigiano Reggiano for garnish

Heat a large (preferably 12-inch) skillet over medium-high heat for 1 minute. Pour in 2 tablespoons of the oil and swirl to coat the

pan. As soon as the oil is shimmering—but not smoking—add the green beans in an even layer across the pan. Scatter the onion slices on top. Season with salt and pepper and let cook undisturbed for 2 minutes. Add the radicchio and sauté, stirring occasionally, until the radicchio has begun to wilt and brown and the green beans are crisp-tender, about another 6 minutes. If the vegetables seem to be cooking too fast or the pan bottom is starting to burn, lower the heat to medium. (If using an electric stovetop, take the pan off the burner momentarily to let the pan cool.) Stir in the garlic, cooking for about another minute to blend in the flavor. Transfer to a serving bowl. Drizzle with the lemon juice and the remaining ½ tablespoon oil; toss gently. Season to taste with salt and pepper, garnish with the Parmigiano shavings, and serve immediately.

maximum flavor in a mixed sauté



Gunk up your pan: For depth of flavor, the vegetables and the pan bottom should brown without burning. That means not stirring too frequently—but do turn down the heat if your pan starts to blacken. (The pan cleans up easily after a short soak in hot, sudsy water.)

Add vegetables in stages: Quicker-cooking vegetables like radicchio and spinach go in a little later. This gives the longer-to-cook vegetables a little more time and space to cook.



Fennel & Red Onion with Arugula

Serves four.

If you can't find baby arugula, larger leaves are fine. Just discard any large stems, tear the leaves into bite-size pieces, and be sure they're washed well.

2 cups loosely packed baby arugula

2½ tablespoons olive oil

1 medium-large bulb fennel, cored and cut into ¼-inch thick slices (to yield about 2 cups)

1 cup ⅛- to ¼-inch thick half-moon slices red onion

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 large clove garlic, minced

¼ cup orange juice, preferably fresh

4 kalamata olives, pitted and coarsely chopped

Scatter the arugula in a wide, shallow serving bowl. Heat a large (preferably 12-inch) skillet over medium-high heat for 1 minute. Pour in 2 tablespoons of the oil and swirl to coat the pan. As soon as the oil is shimmering—but not smoking—

add the fennel and onion in an even layer. Season with salt and pepper and let the vegetables cook undisturbed until they have begun to brown, about 2 minutes. Stir occasionally until the fennel and onion are tender and deep golden brown in places, about another 5 minutes. If the vegetables seem to be cooking too fast or the bottom of the pan is starting to burn, lower the heat to medium. (If using an electric stovetop, take the pan off the burner momentarily to let the pan cool.) Clear a space in the center of the pan and add the remaining ½ tablespoon oil and then the garlic. Let cook until the garlic is fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the orange juice and stir to combine with the vegetables. Pour the mixture over the arugula and toss to combine and to wilt the arugula. Season to taste with salt and pepper, sprinkle with the chopped olives, and serve immediately.





Mushrooms & Spinach with Soppresata Crisps

Serves four to five.

Cremini mushrooms (also called “baby bellas”) look similar to button mushrooms but have brown caps and a meatier texture.

- 1 ounce very thinly sliced hot soppressata or other spicy dried sausage, slices quartered (about ¼ cup or 8 slices ⅛ inch thick)**
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil; more for drizzling**
- 15 ounces cremini mushrooms, halved if small or quartered or cut into sixths if very large (scant 5 cups)**
- 5 medium scallions (white and green parts), trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces (1½ cups)**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 medium cloves garlic, minced**
- 5 ounces baby spinach (about 6 cups)**

Put the soppressata in a large (preferably 12-inch) skillet over medium heat. Cook until crisp, 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer to a small plate lined with paper towels. Increase the heat to

medium high and let the pan heat up for 1 minute. Pour in the oil and swirl to coat the pan. As soon as the oil is shimmering—but not smoking—add the mushrooms in an even layer. Season with salt and pepper and let cook undisturbed until the mushrooms have begun to brown, about 3 minutes. Add the scallion pieces and sauté, stirring as needed, until the mushrooms are golden brown and tender and the scallions are lightly browned in places and softened, another 6 to 7 minutes. If the vegetables seem to be cooking too fast or the pan bottom is starting to burn, lower the heat to medium. (If using an electric stovetop, take the pan off the heat momentarily to let the pan cool.) Stir in the garlic and cook for another 30 seconds. Turn off the heat and add the spinach and crisped soppressata, flipping and stirring to blend and to wilt the spinach. Season to taste with salt and pepper, drizzle with a little olive oil, and serve immediately.

The different vegetables don't need to be cooked separately. Instead, they're added to the pan in succession, according to the amount of time each needs to cook.

Cauliflower & Green Beans with Indian Spices

Serves four to six.

This makes a satisfying simple supper served with basmati rice.

- ½ teaspoon cumin seeds**
- ½ teaspoon yellow mustard seeds**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil; more if needed**
- 1 small yellow onion, cut into medium dice (about ½ cup)**
- 1 small head cauliflower (1¼ to 1½ pounds), trimmed and cut into ½- to 1-inch florets (about 3 cups)**
- 8 ounces green beans, trimmed and snapped into 1- to 1½-inch pieces (about 2 cups)**
- 1 large carrot, peeled and chopped into small (about ¾-inch) pieces**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- 1 teaspoon finely minced fresh ginger**
- Large pinch dried red chile flakes**

Toast the cumin and mustard seeds in a large (preferably 12-inch) dry skillet over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until very fragrant, 4 to 5 minutes; don't let them burn. Immediately transfer to a small bowl.

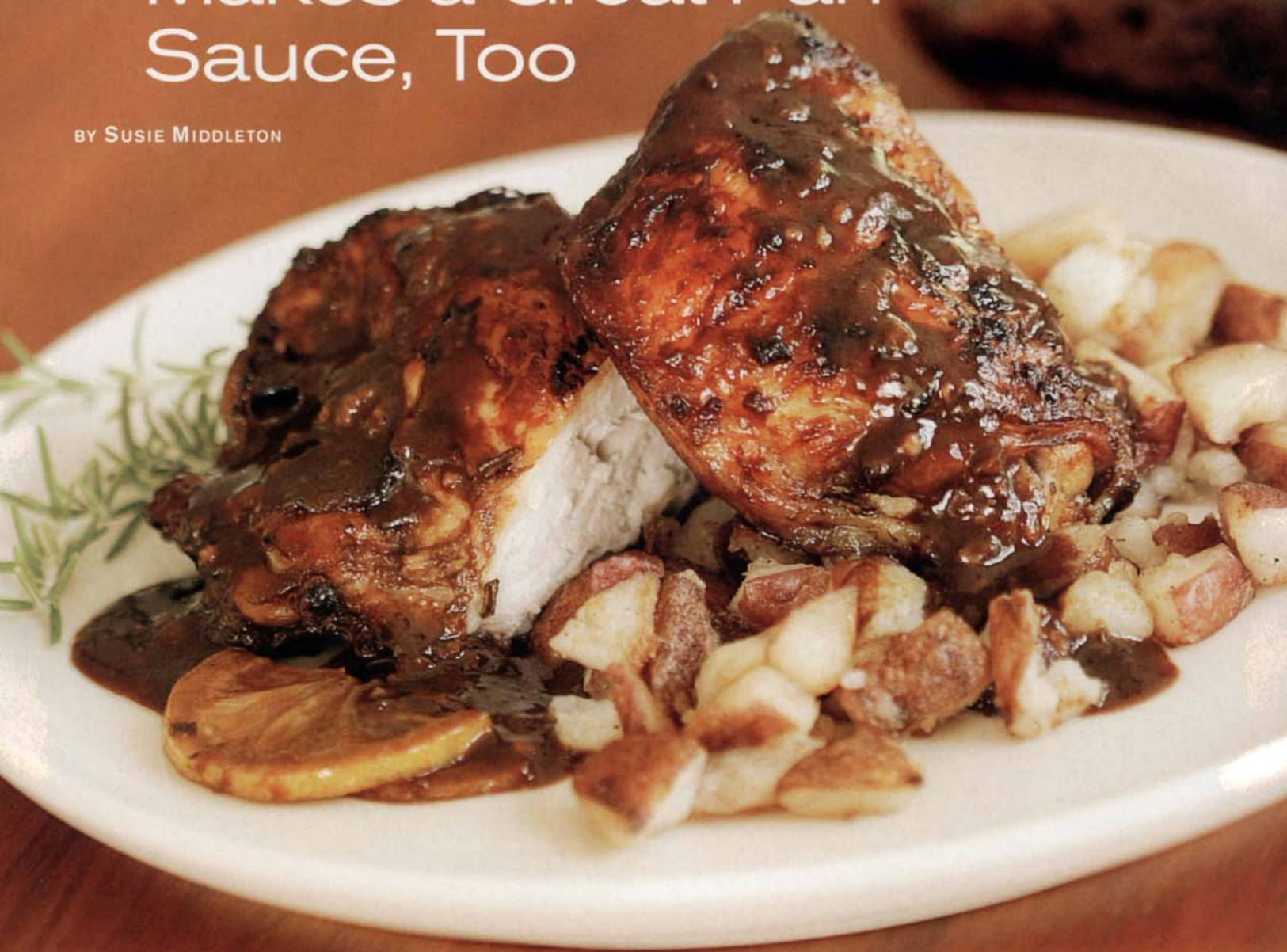
Put the skillet back on medium-high heat for 1 minute. Pour in the oil and swirl to coat the pan. As soon as the oil is shimmering—but not smoking—add the onion and stir to coat with the oil. After about 30 seconds, add the cauliflower, green beans, and carrot in an even layer across the pan. Season with salt and pepper and let cook undisturbed until the vegetables have begun to brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Sauté, stirring occasionally, until the cauliflower is nicely browned, 5 to 7 minutes. If the pan bottom gets too dry and starts to burn, add a scant tablespoon olive oil. Reduce the heat to medium and continue to sauté until the cauliflower is tender, another 2 to 3 minutes. (Cut through a floret with the edge of the metal spatula; the floret should slice in half without crumbling.) Stir in the garlic, ginger, toasted cumin and mustard seeds, and chile flakes. Cook for another minute to blend the flavors. Season to taste with salt and pepper and serve immediately.

Maryellen Driscoll is Fine Cooking's editor at large. ♦

A Marinade for Roast Chicken

Makes a Great Pan Sauce, Too

BY SUSIE MIDDLETON



During this hectic season, wouldn't it be nice to come home from a busy day and have dinner all ready to go in the oven? And not just any dinner, but a delicious dish of marinated chicken? The roasted chicken on these pages not only tastes great (choose your favorite flavor profile from the mari-

nades at right), but it also has a bonus: a richly flavored pan sauce you make from the reduced marinade. And you do all of the prep work in advance—up to 24 hours ahead.

The secret is cooking the chicken and the marinade together. Instead of discarding the marinade, you pour it into

the pan along with the chicken. In about the time it takes to cook the chicken (around an hour), the marinade and the chicken juices reduce to a flavorful essence. After removing the chicken from the oven, you tilt the pan and spoon the fat out—leaving behind all the delicious pan drippings. Add a

Double-duty marinade. A savory marinade poured into the roasting pan along with the chicken cooks down to a delicious sauce, like this one for **Lemon Rosemary Balsamic Chicken.**

A marinade for every mood: four ways to flavor roast chicken

The amount of liquids in each of these marinades is calculated to reduce to just the right consistency for a pan sauce as the chicken cooks. Choose a flavor profile and then follow the master method on p. 52.



Lemon Rosemary Balsamic Mustard

MARINADE:

- 2 teaspoons packed finely grated lemon zest
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary
- 1/3 cup Dijon mustard
- 1/3 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/3 cup balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

EXTRAS:

- 6 to 8 2-inch sprigs fresh rosemary
- 1/2 large lemon, thinly sliced into half-moons

OPTIONAL GARNISH:

- 4 sprigs fresh rosemary

SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Creamy polenta, a hash of red potatoes, or a simple risotto with Parmesan

DRINK SUGGESTIONS

A bright, zippy red wine, like a young, fruity Barbera or a Côtes du Rhône, goes best with these assertive flavors.



Spanish Honey-Cumin with Apricots & Olives

MARINADE:

- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 1/2 teaspoons paprika
- 1/3 cup sherry vinegar
- 1/3 cup fresh orange juice
- 1/4 cup honey
- 3 tablespoons olive oil

EXTRAS:

- 4 ounces dried apricots (about 16)
- 24 green and black assorted olives, whole or pitted

OPTIONAL GARNISH:

- 4 sprigs fresh flat-leaf parsley or cilantro

SERVING SUGGESTION

Spanish rice pilaf, scented with saffron and studded with pine nuts

DRINK SUGGESTIONS

Pale ale, which has both fruity and bitter notes, is delicious with the sweet-salty contrast in this marinade.



Triple-Sesame Ginger

MARINADE:

- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh ginger
- 1/3 cup sesame tahini (mix well before measuring; for more on tahini, see p. 74)
- 1/3 cup soy sauce
- 1/3 cup dry sherry
- 1/3 cup honey
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon Tabasco or other hot sauce

EXTRA:

- 1 large bunch scallions (white and light green parts, reserve 1 scallion for the garnish below), cut into 1-inch pieces

OPTIONAL GARNISH:

- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds
- 1 scallion, sliced very thinly at an extreme angle

SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Short-grain white or brown rice

DRINK SUGGESTIONS

Choose a fruity wine with a hint of sweetness, such as a domestic Chenin Blanc or an off-dry Riesling.



Thai Lemongrass Peanut

MARINADE:

- 1/4 cup sliced and finely chopped fresh lemongrass (1 to 2 stalks, tough outer leaves removed)
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice (from about 3 small limes)
- 1/2 cup coconut milk, well stirred
- 1/4 cup fish sauce
- 1/4 cup roughly chopped fresh cilantro
- 3 tablespoons packed light brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons creamy peanut butter

EXTRAS:

- 8 to 12 cloves garlic, peeled, or 4 to 5 shallots, peeled and cut in half (or a mix)

OPTIONAL GARNISH:

- 2 tablespoons finely chopped peanuts
- Fresh cilantro, sprigs or chopped leaves

SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Wide or thin rice noodles, or jasmine or basmati rice

DRINK SUGGESTIONS

A light-bodied lager beer or a fruity Riesling would be a good match for the Asian flavors of this marinade.

few tablespoons of water and vigorously stir and scrape the pan, and you've got an incredibly flavorful pan sauce.

Pyrex pans—inexpensive and sold in supermarkets—are perfect for these recipes because you can see the pan drippings so well. For these recipes, I like to use one 10x15-inch Pyrex baking dish or two 7x11-inch ones. If you use a different kind of roasting pan, be sure it's shallow and that the dimensions are similar. If the pan is too small, the marinade won't reduce enough; if it's too big, the marinade might reduce too quickly and start to burn.

Everyone can get a bit of both white and dark meat. I've called for four thighs and two breasts (you'll cut each breast in half after cooking), because I think one thigh and half a breast, served on a mound of mashed potatoes or rice pilaf and drizzled with a little pan sauce, makes a nice presentation. But you could certainly use any combination of your favorite bone-in pieces. Look for chicken pieces that aren't too different in size; these days, some chicken breasts are huge. I prefer the smaller ones, and I flatten them slightly to help them cook more evenly. Don't be tempted to remove the skin, as it keeps the chicken moist during cooking and absorbs a lot of the flavor of the marinade.

One more tip: Seal the bowl of marinating chicken in plastic before refrigerating. There's a healthy dose of garlic in each marinade, and wrapping tightly will keep everything else in your refrigerator from becoming garlic scented.

master recipe

Marinated Roast Chicken with Pan Sauce

Serves four.

2 bone-in, skin-on chicken breast halves

4 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs

Kosher salt

5 large cloves garlic, peeled

Marinade ingredients (choose one option from p. 51)

1 Marinate the chicken pieces for 6 to 24 hours.

Wash and dry the chicken pieces thoroughly. Press down on the chicken breasts with the palm of your hand to flatten slightly (allowing rib cartilage to pop away or break in half). With a sharp knife, poke three or four slits in both sides of each piece of chicken to help the marinade penetrate. Put the chicken in a large nonreactive bowl. Toss with kosher salt (use 1 ½ teaspoons if making any of the marinades except for the Triple-Sesame or Thai, which contain soy sauce and fish sauce; use a scant teaspoon for those). Crush the garlic cloves, sprinkle with a little salt, and mince finely into a paste; you should have 1 ½ to 2 tablespoons. Add to the chicken and coat the pieces roughly with the garlic paste.

Combine all the marinade ingredients (but not the extras) in a small bowl and whisk until thoroughly combined. Scrape into the bowl of chicken and toss to coat (I like to mix with my hands to distribute evenly). Toss in the extras and then press on the chicken to be sure the marinade has coated and surrounded all the pieces. Wrap the bowl well with plastic and refrigerate for at least 6 hours and up to 24 hours.

2 Up to an hour ahead, remove the chicken from the refrigerator to take off the chill.

Take the chicken out of the refrigerator and pour the chicken and marinade (scraping the bowl) into one 10x15-inch or two 7x11-inch Pyrex baking dishes. Adjust the chicken so its skin side up and the pieces are evenly spaced. Tuck the extras under and around the chicken pieces. Sprinkle each piece of chicken with a pinch of salt (omit if using the Thai marinade). Let the chicken sit for at least 20 minutes or up to an hour to warm up a bit so it will cook more evenly. Meanwhile, heat the oven to 400°F.

3 Roast the chicken for an hour, basting two or three times.



Put the chicken in the oven to roast. As it cooks, the marinade will bubble and begin to reduce. After 30 minutes, baste occasionally with the pan juices to help brown the skin and keep the chicken moist. The chicken is done when it turns deep brown and the pan juices have reduced (the sides of the pan will be very dark brown and look almost burned, and a paring knife will slide easily into a thigh), about 1 hour. The pan juices may separate, meaning the fat will be floating on top of the juices, which will be very thick.

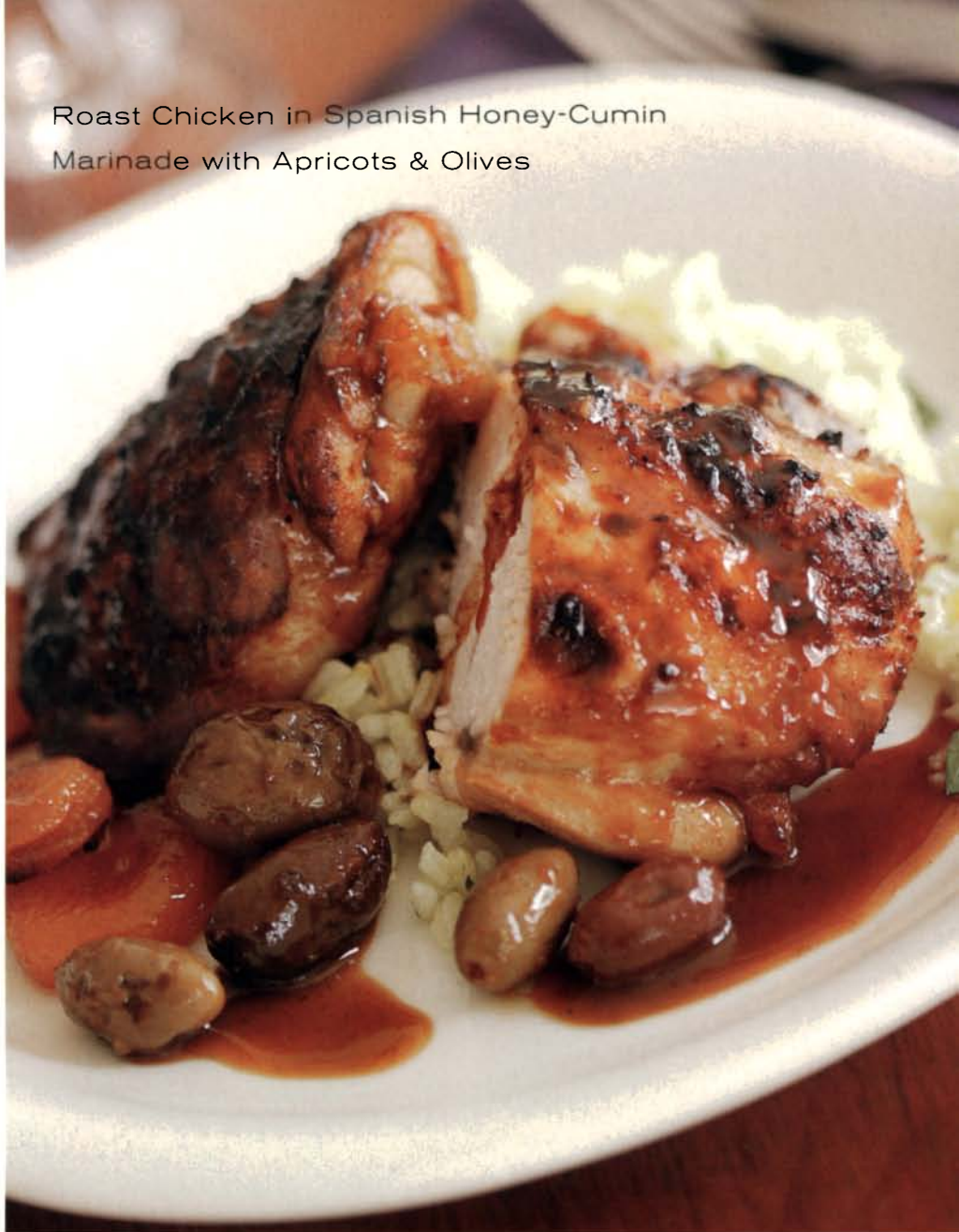
Roast Chicken in Spanish Honey-Cumin Marinade with Apricots & Olives

4 Make a sauce from the flavorful pan drippings.

Transfer the chicken pieces to a cutting board and tent with foil. Discard any herbs such as rosemary sprigs but transfer all the other extras to a small bowl and reserve.



Hold one end of the pan with a potholder and gently tilt the pan to let the juices run into one corner. With a large, shallow spoon, spoon off as much fat as possible but leave any savory juices and pan drippings behind (they may look clumpy). Add 2 tablespoons water to the pan (or 1 tablespoon to each of the two pans) and use a wooden spoon to scrape off enough of the baked-on pan drippings from the sides and bottom of the pan to form a slightly thickened, deeply colored, rich-looking sauce (you won't need to scrape the whole pan). Taste the sauce—if it's too intense, add a little more water; if it isn't flavorful enough, keep scraping and stirring. (Note: Make the pan sauce while the pan is still hot; if you get delayed, use hot water to make the sauce, or put the pan back in the oven briefly to warm it.)



5 Serve one thigh and half of a breast, drizzled with pan sauce, over potatoes, rice, or pasta.

Cut each chicken breast in half by centering a large chef's knife over it and then pushing down and slicing at the same time (the knife will cut right through the cartilage). Serve a thigh and half of a breast, with a few spoonfuls of sauce over all and a portion of the extras, to each diner. Add the optional garnish if you like.

*Susie Middleton is the editor of
Fine Cooking.* ♦

Chocolate pavlova

impressive yet

BY GALE GAND



Make a meringue base with a chewy, brownie-like interior and a crackly crust; top it with whipped cream and fresh fruit

easy to make

Chocolate Pavlova with Tangerine Whipped Cream

Serves eight to ten.

4 large egg whites, at room temperature
1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar
1/8 teaspoon table salt
1 cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons cornstarch
1 tablespoon red-wine vinegar
3/4 ounce (1/4 cup) unsweetened Dutch-processed cocoa powder, sifted
1 cup heavy cream
Finely grated zest of 1 tangerine (about 1 1/4 teaspoons)
1 1/2 cups fresh fruit, such as raspberries, sliced strawberries, peeled and sliced mango, or a mix
3 kiwi, peeled and sliced into half moons

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Cut a piece of parchment so that it fits flat on a baking sheet. With a pencil, draw a 9-inch circle in the center of the parchment (tracing a 9-inch cake pan works fine). Line the baking sheet with the parchment, pencil side facing down (you should still be able to see the circle).

MAKE THE MERINGUE: With an electric hand mixer or stand mixer (use the whisk attachment), whip the egg whites, cream of tartar, and salt in a large dry bowl on medium speed until foamy, about 30 seconds. Gradually add 1 cup of the sugar and then the cornstarch and vinegar; whip on medium high

until the whites hold stiff peaks and look glossy, another 3 to 5 minutes **1**. Add the sifted cocoa powder and mix on low speed until mostly combined, 20 to 30 seconds, scraping the bowl as needed. Finish mixing the cocoa into the meringue by hand with a rubber spatula until well combined and no streaks of white remain.

SHAPE AND BAKE:

Pile the meringue inside the circle on the parchment. Using the spatula, spread the meringue to even it out slightly—it doesn't need to align perfectly with the circle, and it shouldn't be perfectly smooth or overworked **2**. The natural swirls and ridges give the finished meringue character.

Bake for 10 minutes and then reduce the heat to 300°F and bake until the meringue has puffed and cracked around its edges, another 45 to 50 minutes. Turn off the oven, prop the oven door open, and leave the meringue in the oven to cool to room temperature, at least 30 minutes. The delicate meringue won't collapse as much if it cools gradually.

ASSEMBLE AND SERVE:

Just before serving, put the meringue on a serving platter **3**. In a chilled medium stainless-steel bowl, beat the cream with the remaining 2 tablespoons sugar until it holds soft peaks. Whip in the tangerine zest, making sure it's evenly distributed. Pile the whipped cream on the meringue, spreading it almost out to the edge, and then top with the fruit. To serve, slice into wedges with a serrated knife.



Gale Gand is the executive pastry chef and partner at TRU in Chicago. ♦

a lighter touch with **Bean Soups**

BY TONY ROSENFELD

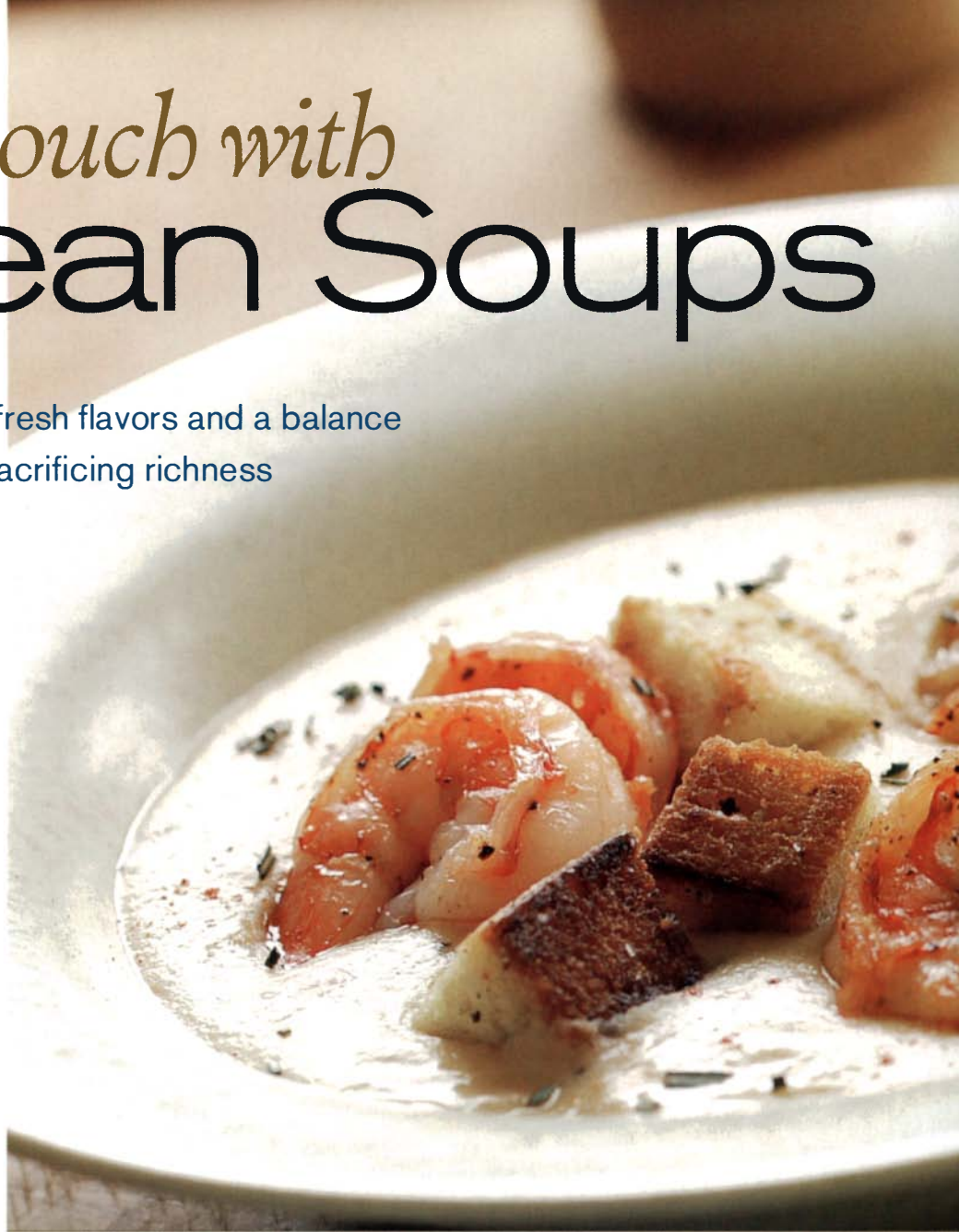
These soups deliver fresh flavors and a balance of textures, without sacrificing richness

Many bean soups have all the subtlety of a bowl of oatmeal: satisfying, certainly, but working your way through a whole bowl can prove a heavy task. The bean soups I like best are lighter. Layers of flavors and textures take the place of a dense, porridgy broth. They're not fussy, either. I don't empty the kitchen cupboard into these soups; rather, I allow a few strong flavors to lead the way. And while these soups are quick to put together, they're somewhat slow to cook. But if you're like me, you won't mind a pot of gently simmering soup filling the kitchen with warmth on a cold winter day.

Four tricks for deeper flavor, better texture

I use at least one substantial flavor to perk up the beans in each of these soups. Cured pork, like bacon in the lentil soup or chorizo in the chickpea soup, not only adds salty richness but also cuts through the starchiness of the beans. Roasting vegetables before stirring them into a minestrone adds an extra layer of flavor. And a little bit of an earthy herb like rosemary makes a white bean soup more interesting.

To add texture and crunch to these soups, I stir in or sprinkle on garnishes like croutons, crisped bacon, or fresh herbs toward the end of cooking. It's a trick that gives a soup some complexity. You can also control the texture of the soup by puréeing some or all of the beans. Puréeing a portion of a soup gives it some substance, while puréeing it completely gives it a smooth, elegant edge.



White Bean Soup with Sautéed Shrimp & Garlic Croutons

Serves four as a first course; yields about 6 cups.

1½ cups dried cannellini beans, sorted through and rinsed
5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil; plus 1 tablespoon for drizzling
1 large yellow onion, cut into ¼-inch dice
1 carrot, peeled and cut into ¼-inch dice
1 inner rib celery, cut into ¼-inch dice
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary
4 teaspoons fresh lemon juice; more to taste
2½ cups ¾-inch diced country bread or baguette (about 6 ounces)

¾ pound large (21-25 count) shrimp, peeled, deveined, rinsed, sliced in half lengthwise, and patted dry
Pinch cayenne

Cook the cannellini beans following the Basic Beans method at right.

Heat a large, heavy saucepan over medium-high heat for 30 seconds. Add 1½ tablespoons of the oil, along with the onion, carrot, and celery. Season with salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables soften and start to brown, about 7 minutes. Add half the garlic and cook for 30 seconds, stirring. Add the beans and their cooking liquid (there should be about 4 cups liquid; if not, add more water to equal this amount) and half the rose-



mary. Season well with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, lower the heat to a bare simmer, and cook for 30 minutes so that the beans soften a little more but don't break up. Let cool for 10 minutes. Scoop out 1 cup of the beans and set aside. Working in batches, purée the remaining beans and all of the broth in a blender. Transfer the puréed soup and the reserved beans to a clean saucepan and keep warm over low heat. Add the lemon juice and salt and pepper to taste. Thin with water, if necessary, to get the consistency you like.

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat for 1 minute. Add 1½ tablespoons of the oil and the bread cubes

and season well with salt and pepper. Cook, tossing frequently, until the bread starts to brown around the edges, 2 to 3 minutes. Toss in the remaining garlic and continue cooking for 1 minute, tossing well. Transfer to a large plate. Season the shrimp well with salt and pepper. Add the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil and the shrimp to the skillet and sauté, stirring often, until the shrimp is firm, opaque, and browned slightly, 3 to 4 minutes.

Ladle the soup into large, shallow bowls and dust with a pinch of cayenne. Garnish with a few of the croutons, a portion of the shrimp, a sprinkling of the remaining rosemary, and a drizzle of oil.

Avoid overcooked beans and washed-out flavors by gently cooking the beans separately from the soup.



Basic Beans

1 cup dried beans yields about 3 cups cooked

2 bay leaves

2 cloves garlic, smashed

2 to 3 sprigs fresh herbs (such as rosemary, thyme, or flat-leaf parsley)

1 to 1½ cups dried beans, sorted through and rinsed

1 teaspoon kosher salt

Wrap the bay leaves, garlic, and herbs in cheesecloth and tie with twine. Put the beans in a large pot and cover with water by 2 inches (about 2 quarts). Add the herb bundle and the salt. Bring to a boil over high heat. Lower the heat to maintain a very gentle simmer, cover, and cook until the beans are tender (try biting into one) but not splitting and falling apart, 1 to 2 hours depending on the type of bean (check occasionally to be sure the beans aren't boiling and are covered with liquid; add water if needed). Discard the herb bundle. Add the beans and their cooking liquid immediately to the soup recipes, or let the beans cool in the liquid and refrigerate for up to three days.

COOKING TIMES

Bean cooking times will vary depending on the freshness of the beans.

cannellini beans: about 1 hour 15 minutes

chickpeas: about 2 hours

kidney beans: about 1 hour 15 minutes



Roasted Vegetable Minestrone

Serves six to eight; yields about 10 cups.

- 1¼ cups mixed dried cannellini and dried kidney beans, sorted through and rinsed**
- 1 large bulb fennel, quartered, cored, and cut into ¾-inch slices**
- 3 inner ribs celery, cut into 2-inch pieces**
- 2 large carrots, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces**
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 28-ounce can whole tomatoes**
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary**
- ¼ pound dried ditalini (or other small tubular pasta), cooked until tender, rinsed with cold water, and drained**
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**
- ½ cup finely grated Parmigiano Reggiano**

Cook the cannellini and kidney beans together, following the Basic Beans method on p. 57. Meanwhile, heat the oven to 450°F. In a large bowl, toss the fennel, celery, and carrots with the oil; season generously with salt and pepper. Spread on a rimmed baking sheet lined with foil. Roast, tossing after 10 minutes and every 5 minutes thereafter, until the vegetables are nicely browned and tender when pierced with a fork, about 30 minutes. Let cool for at

least 15 minutes. Transfer the vegetables to a cutting board, chop them coarsely, and put them in a large pot. Slice the tomatoes into large pieces and add them and their juices, the beans, 3 cups of their cooking liquid (or add water to equal this amount), and 1 tablespoon of the rosemary to the pot. Bring to a boil, turn the heat to medium low, cover, and simmer for 40 minutes, stirring occasionally. Thin with water, if necessary, to get the consistency you like. Stir in the cooked pasta, the remaining 1 teaspoon rosemary, the parsley, ¼ cup of the Parmigiano, and salt and pepper to taste. Ladle into bowls and serve immediately with a generous sprinkle of the remaining Parmigiano.

cooking ahead: You can cook the beans two or three days ahead. Let them cool in their cooking liquid and then refrigerate.



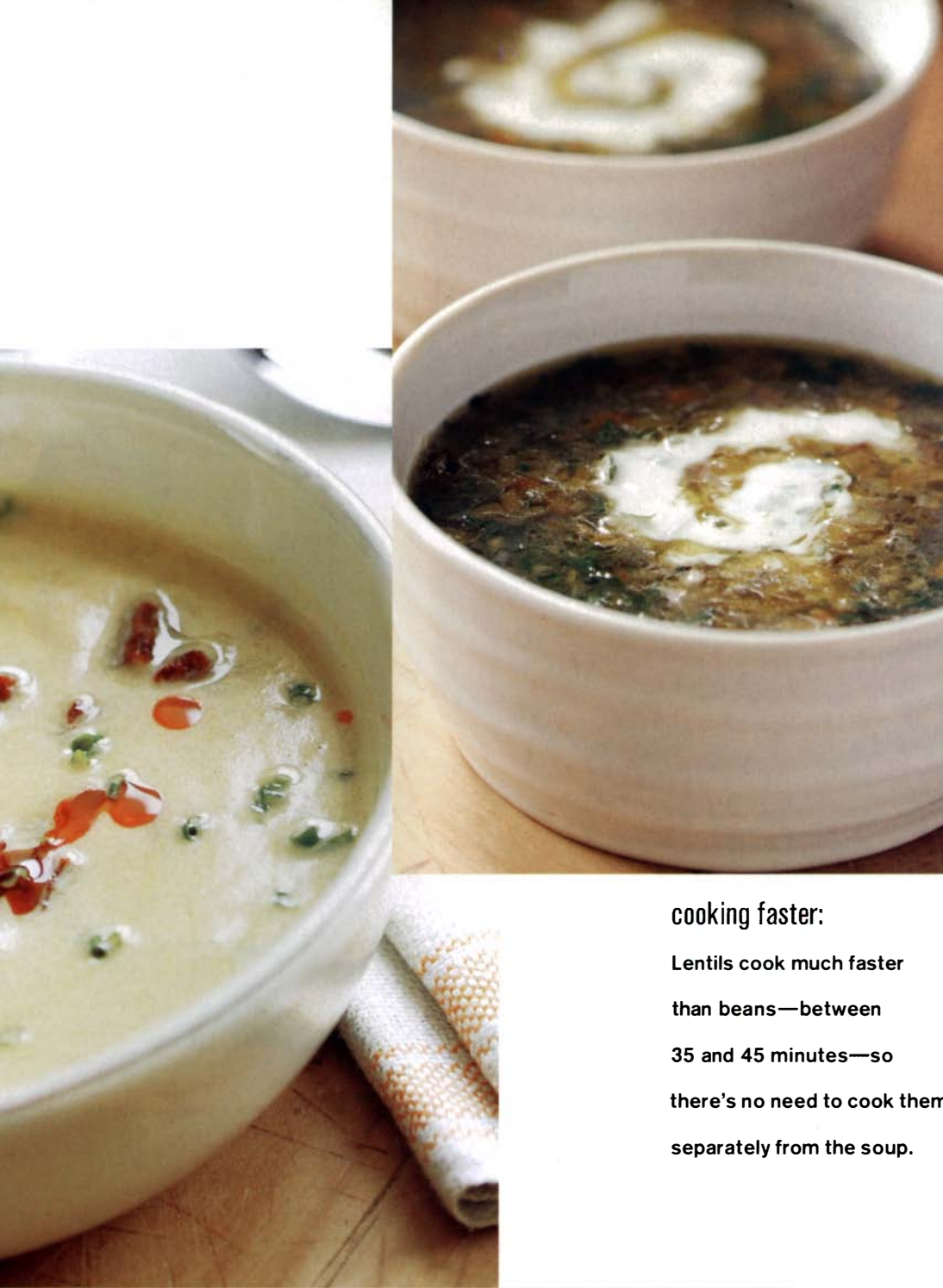
Creamy Chickpea Soup with Crisp Chorizo

Serves four; yields about 6 cups.

- 1 cup dried chickpeas, sorted through and rinsed**
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 yellow onion, diced**
- 1 medium carrot, peeled and diced**
- 1 inner rib celery, diced**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 1 clove garlic, minced**
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme**
- ¼ cup heavy cream**
- 1 tablespoon sherry vinegar**
- 10 ounces chorizo, cut into ½-inch dice**
- 3 tablespoons thinly sliced fresh chives**

Cook the chickpeas following the Basic Beans method on p. 57. Be sure they're completely tender; chickpeas take longer to cook than most beans.

Heat 1½ tablespoons of the oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat for 30 seconds. Add the onion, carrot, and celery, season with salt, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables soften and start to brown, about 7 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 30 seconds, stirring. Add the chickpeas and their cooking liquid (there should be about 4 cups; if not, add



Spiced Lentil Soup with Herbed Yogurt

Serves four to six; yields about 6 cups.

To learn more about lentils, see From Our Test Kitchen, p. 71.

- 4 ounces bacon (about 4 slices), cut into thin strips**
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 large leek (white and light green parts), cut in half, rinsed of grit, and finely diced**
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and finely diced**
- 1 rib celery, finely diced**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin**
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander**
- 1½ cups dried French green lentils (or brown lentils), sorted through and rinsed**
- 6 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro**
- 1 cup plain yogurt**
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint**

Cook the bacon in the oil in a large saucepan or pot over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until it's brown and crisp, about 8 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to a plate lined with paper towels. Add the leek, carrots, and celery to the pan, season with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables soften and just start to brown, about 7 minutes. Stir in the cumin and coriander and cook for 30 seconds. Stir in the lentils and 5 cups water and season with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to a gentle simmer, cover, and cook until the lentils become tender but not mushy, about 45 minutes. Stir in ¼ cup of the cilantro and the reserved bacon. Thin with water, if necessary, to get the consistency you like. Taste for salt and pepper.

In a small bowl, mix the yogurt with the remaining 2 tablespoons cilantro and the mint and season with salt. Ladle the soup into serving bowls, top with a dollop of the yogurt, and serve immediately.

Tony Rosenfeld is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking. ♦

cooking faster:

Lentils cook much faster than beans—between 35 and 45 minutes—so there's no need to cook them separately from the soup.

more water to equal this amount) and half of the thyme. Season well with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to a bare simmer, and cook for 30 minutes so that the chickpeas soften a little more but don't break up. Working in batches, purée the chickpeas and broth in a blender. Return the puréed soup to the saucepan, stir in the cream, vinegar, and remaining chopped thyme, and keep warm over low heat, stirring occasionally to prevent scorching. Taste for salt, pepper, and vinegar.

Set a large skillet over medium-high heat for 1 minute. Cook the chorizo in the remaining 1½ tablespoons oil until it's brown and crisp, about 8 minutes; reduce the heat if it starts to burn. With a slotted spoon, transfer half the chorizo to a plate lined with paper towels and stir the rest into the soup. Reserve the cooking oil from the chorizo if you like.

Ladle the soup into shallow bowls. Sprinkle with the chorizo, scatter with the chives, and drizzle with a bit of the reserved chorizo oil, if you like. Serve immediately.

3 methods for Macaroni and Cheese

Want to know how chefs elevate homey food? Here are three creative takes on macaroni and cheese

COMPILED BY AMY ALBERT

For a long time, I was reluctant (especially among my foodier friends) to admit how much I like to make macaroni and cheese. But the more I talked with chefs I know, the clearer it became that macaroni and cheese is exactly the kind of food that they like to cook for themselves, for family, and for friends on nights off. I started fantasizing: Just how would a chef put his or her own special signature on this dish to make it deluxe?

I asked three chefs to create their own favorite version of macaroni and cheese. Each chef gave me a deliciously different take: Not only are the flavors different, but each version is bound and thickened with a different method: with a white sauce, with a savory custard, and with cream.



Luxurious Four-Cheese Macaroni & Cheese

Serves eight as a main course.

Adding the cheese in two stages helps to create the best consistency.

3 cups whole milk
4 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 medium onion, finely diced
(about 1 cup)
1 bay leaf
¼ cup all-purpose flour
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
Pinch freshly grated nutmeg
¼ teaspoon Tabasco sauce; more to taste
5 ounces Gruyère, coarsely grated
(about 1¾ cups lightly packed)
8 ounces blue cheese (I like Maytag Blue), crumbled (about 2 cups)
1 pound dried penne rigate pasta
1 tablespoon finely grated lemon zest

Ben Barker brings it together with a classic white sauce



Ben Barker is the chef and a co-owner (with his wife, Karen Barker) of Magnolia Grill in Durham, North Carolina.

This mac and cheese, a luxurious version of a traditional southern accompaniment for ham, is equally good as a main course with a simple salad. I like to use Maytag Blue, Gruyère, Monterey Jack, and Parmigiano Reggiano—cheeses that might not be traditional for macaroni and cheese but that I love for their robust flavor.

I start with the traditional binder for classic mac and cheese: béchamel, or white sauce—really just a mixture of butter and flour into which you whisk hot milk and cook slowly until thickened.

There's no question that this combination of classic béchamel and bold mix of cheeses creates an over-the-top mac and cheese. So, as a main course, I recommend serving it with an arugula salad tossed with a straightforward vinaigrette. Sparkling wine or Champagne is the perfect drink to accompany the dish since it counters the richness.

11 ounces Monterey Jack, cut into ½-inch dice (2 cups)
½ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
2 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves
2½ ounces Parmigiano Reggiano, freshly grated (scant 1 cup)
¾ cup fresh breadcrumbs

Heat the oven to 350°F. Put a large pot of well-salted water on to boil.

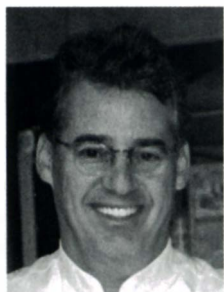
Meanwhile, heat the milk in a small saucepan over medium-low heat to just below a simmer, stirring often to prevent scorching. Remove from the heat and cover to keep hot. Melt the butter in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat. Add the onion and bay leaf. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion starts to soften and becomes translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the flour and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Gradually whisk in the hot milk, bring to a simmer, and cook for 10 minutes,

whisking frequently, until thickened and smooth. Season the white sauce with 1 teaspoon salt, pepper to taste, the nutmeg, and the Tabasco. Remove and discard the bay leaf. Stir in the Gruyère and blue cheese.

Cook the pasta to al dente, following the package directions. Drain well and return to the pot. Toss the lemon zest and half of the Monterey Jack into the pasta while it's still hot; add the cheese sauce and quickly toss to combine. Stir in the parsley and thyme and transfer half of the pasta to a large (3-quart) shallow casserole or lasagna pan. Sprinkle with the remaining Monterey Jack and half of the Parmigiano; top with the remaining pasta. Sprinkle with the remaining Parmigiano and the breadcrumbs. Bake until bubbling and golden, 50 to 60 minutes. Let rest for 5 to 10 minutes before serving.



To make a traditional white sauce to bind macaroni and cheese, whisk hot milk into a cooked paste of butter and flour.



Robert Del Grande is the chef and co-owner of Cafe Annie and Cafe Express in Houston.

On my night off, I like “cocktail food”: not weiners on toothpicks, but food I can prepare and then let simmer or bake for 40 minutes or so—long enough to relax and have a cocktail before dinner. It’s the antithesis of what I do during the week, which is to stand behind a line and cook under pressure.

With mac and cheese as the goal, I thought of comfort and nostalgia. Comfort food in Texas means cheese and chiles and their creamy-zingy combination. And then, I thought, what about corn tortillas? So, I chopped some up, along with the chiles and cilantro, for added texture and aroma. Eggs that form a savory custard seemed a natural way to bind it all together.

I love the anticipation that builds when preparing this dish. You smell the chiles as they char and think, oh, this is going to be good. Then when you pulse the chiles and cilantro together, you notice that the bright green color is pretty great. And when the dish starts to bake, the aromas build, and you know you’re in for something really good.

This casserole is so full of flavor that all you’ll need to serve with it is roasted pork loin or roasted chicken, simply seasoned with salt and pepper. To drink, I like rustic red wines—Syrah, Zinfandel, Grenache—or a full-flavored beer such as Pilsen or pale ale.



Robert Del Grande makes a savory custard with a Tex-Mex kick

Tex-Mex Macaroni & Cheese with Green Chiles

Serves four to six as a main dish or eight to ten as a side dish.

The poblanos’ kick plays well off the cheese and savory custard’s creaminess. Poblanos can vary in heat level; smaller, darker ones can sometimes be spicier. If your nose stings or if the raw chile tastes wildly spicy when you bite into it, go easy.

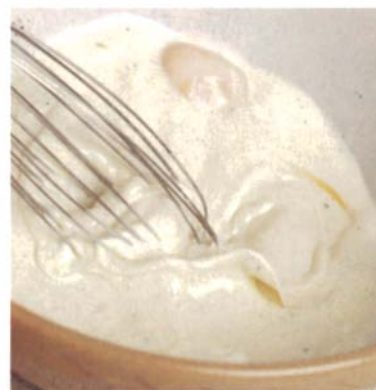
- Softened butter for the baking dish**
- 1 pound poblano chiles (4 to 6 chiles)**
- Olive oil for the chiles**
- 6 white corn tortillas (5½ inches in diameter)**
- 1 cup fresh cilantro leaves**
- 2 cups half-and-half**
- 3 large eggs**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 8 ounces dried elbow macaroni**
- 8 ounces Monterey Jack, grated**
- 8 ounces sharp Cheddar, grated**

Put a pot of water on to boil. Butter a shallow 2- to 3-quart baking dish.

Heat the broiler on high. Rub the poblanos lightly with olive oil and broil them as close to the element as possible on a baking sheet lined with foil, turning as needed, until the skins are blackened all over. Transfer to a bowl, cover the bowl with plastic, and let cool to room temperature. Turn off the broiler and heat the oven to 350°F. Remove and discard the charred poblano skins, the stems, and the seeds. Chop the chiles roughly and put them in a food processor. In a hot dry skillet over medium-high heat, lightly toast the tortillas until they’re just softened and give off a toasted corn aroma, 30 to 60 seconds per

side (don’t let them become crisp). Roughly chop the tortillas and add them to the chiles in the food processor, along with the cilantro leaves. Pulse until finely chopped but not puréed. In a large bowl, whisk together the half-and-half, eggs, salt, and pepper until well combined. Stir in the chopped chile mixture.

When the water boils, salt it well and boil the macaroni until al dente, following the package directions. Drain well. Add the pasta to the egg mixture, along with two-thirds of the grated cheeses; stir to combine. Pour the mixture into the buttered baking dish. Scatter the remaining grated cheeses evenly over the macaroni. (If baking in a 2-quart dish, set it on a baking sheet to catch any drippings.) Bake until browned and bubbling, about 40 minutes. If you want to brown the center more, flash it briefly under the broiler. Let rest for 10 minutes before serving.



A savory custard of eggs and half-and-half, whisked together, binds this mac and cheese.

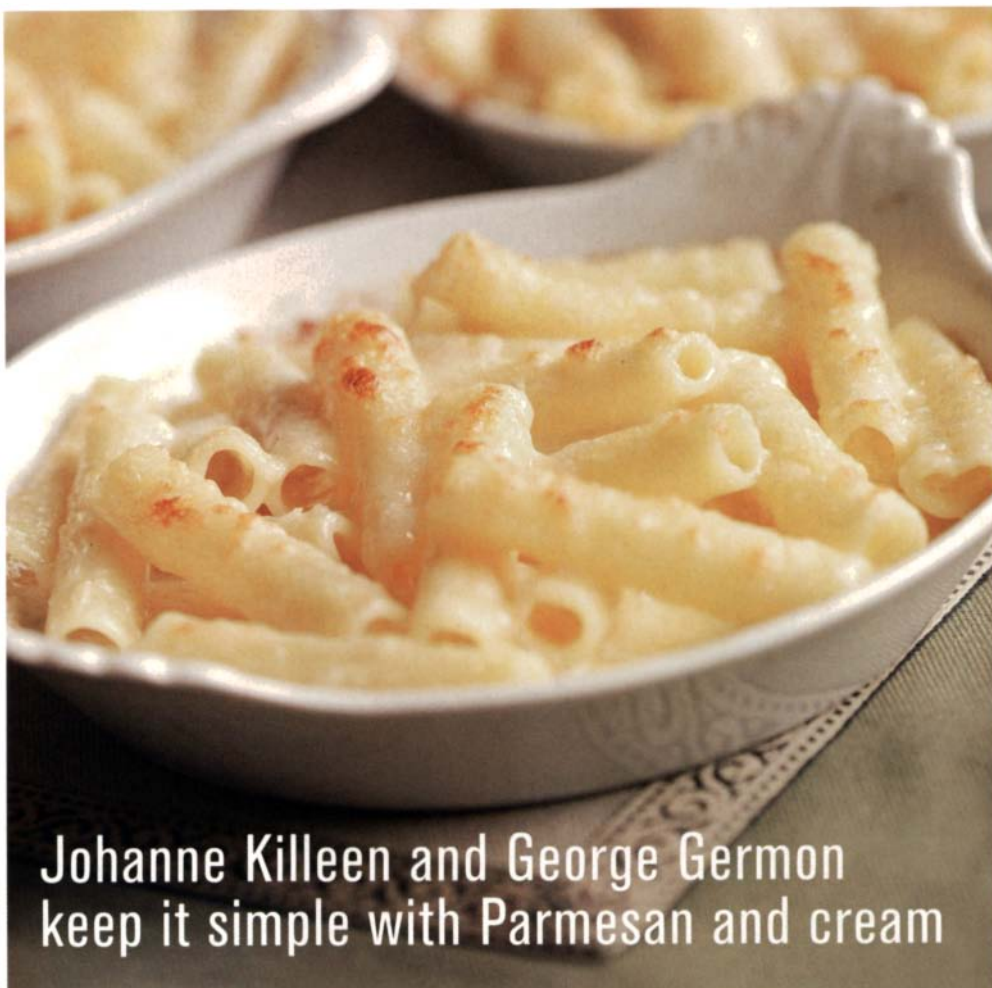


Johanne Killeen and George Germon, the authors of *Cucina Simpatica*, are the chef-owners of Al Forno restaurant in Providence, Rhode Island.

We love American-style macaroni and cheese as much as anyone else, but whenever pasta is involved, our thoughts turn to Italy, so mac and cheese becomes ziti with Parmigiano Reggiano. As the thickener, we just let the cheese melt right into the cream. We bake the dish briefly at high heat so the intense heat of the oven works to reduce the cream and thicken it slightly.

Quality is crucial when you have such a simple recipe with so few ingredients, so we encourage you to use genuine Parmigiano Reggiano. (A lesser Parmesan or a Grana Padano may have a higher salt content, which could make this dish too heavy, too salty, or both.) Buy a chunk rather than a container of grated cheese. Look for a chunk that has "Parmigiano Reggiano" stamped on the rind. It should be very firm and straw colored with whitish flecks and deliciously fragrant but not at all pungent, with a nutty flavor and tiny crunchy granules. For the pasta itself, we like Barilla, De Cecco, and Del Verde brands.

We serve this in individual shallow dishes, but a large gratin dish works, too. Just be sure it's shallow: If the dish is deep, the pasta on the bottom will become too soft and the top noodles may get too brown. You could serve this as a small main course and follow it with a salad, but we offer our baked pasta as a first course by itself, following with something light like roasted chicken, baked salmon, or breaded cutlets.



Johanne Killeen and George Germon
keep it simple with Parmesan and cream

Baked Pasta with Cream & Parmigiano Reggiano

Serves four as a main course.

This dish is essentially a baked version of fettuccine alfredo; you can't help but notice the similarity when you take the first bite.

1¼ cups heavy cream
3 ounces Parmigiano Reggiano, freshly grated (1 generous cup)
Kosher salt and freshly ground white pepper
8 ounces dried ziti
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

Heat the oven to 500°F. In a large pot, bring 3 quarts of water to a boil. In a large bowl, combine the cream with all but 2 tablespoons of the cheese, ¼ teaspoon salt, and white pepper to taste.

When the water is boiling, salt it generously and add the ziti. Undercook the pasta slightly so that it's a bit toothier than al dente, 1 to 2 minutes

less than the package directions. Drain well. Add the pasta to the cream mixture. Divide among four individual shallow ceramic gratin dishes (6 to 8 inches wide). Sprinkle with the remaining cheese and dot with the butter. Bake until the pasta is bubbly and hot and the edges begin to brown, about 10 minutes. Don't overbake or the sauce may separate. Let rest for 3 to 5 minutes before serving. ♦



In a hot oven, the heavy cream in this recipe reduces and thickens while the Parmesan melts for an alfredo-like baked pasta.

Classic Boston Cream



BY GREG PATENT

I've always loved Boston cream pie, which isn't really a pie at all, but two layers of buttery yellow cake filled with pastry cream and topped with a chocolate glaze. I find the luscious textures and flavors irresistible. But I always wondered what the history of the dessert was—and why it was called a pie. While researching my cookbook, *Baking in America*, I did some sleuthing and discovered that the “pie” is really the marriage of an elegant 19th-century hotel restaurant dessert and a simple, old-fashioned American home treat.

The Parker House Hotel in Boston was undoubtedly the birthplace of Boston cream pie. The first chief cook there, a Frenchman named Sanzian, probably created the Parker House Chocolate Cream Pie—two layers of classic French butter sponge cake filled with a thick layer of silky-smooth rum-flavored pastry cream, surrounded by pastry cream on the sides, and coated with toasted almonds. What really made it special was its glaze of chocolate fondant (kneaded sugar syrup), which was embellished with swirls of white fondant. And fondant was precisely why this

creation was entirely too complicated for the 19th-century home cook to make.

Instead, American home cooks of that time often made simple butter cakes baked in shallow pans or pie tins. One such “pie,” the Washington Pie, was filled with jam and dusted with confectioners' sugar. Over time, a custard filling replaced the jam filling, and the Washington Pie became a “cream” pie. The 1934 edition of Fannie Farmer's cookbook called the dessert “Cream Pie (Boston Cream Pie).” And finally, the 1950 edition of *Betty Crocker's Picture Cook Book* put a choco-

Pie

Make this elegant dessert in stages

This Boston cream “pie” is a stunning version of the original dessert created more than 100 years ago. Making the individual components—a sponge cake with a rum syrup, a luscious pastry cream, a rich chocolate ganache, a confectioner’s icing drizzle, and toasted almonds—takes a bit of time, but when they all come together, the result is beautiful and delicious.

Timetable

One day ahead:

- ❖ Make the pastry cream (recipe at right). It must be thoroughly chilled before using.
- ❖ Make the rum syrup (recipe below).
- ❖ Toast 1 cup sliced almonds until golden brown.

The morning before serving:

- ❖ Make the cake (see p. 68).

The afternoon before serving:

- ❖ Make the chocolate ganache (p. 67).
- ❖ Make the white icing (p. 67) just before you’re ready to assemble.
- ❖ Assemble the dessert, following the step-by-step instructions on pp. 66-67.

Pastry Cream

Yields 2½ cups.

- 2 cups whole milk**
- 2 large eggs**
- 2 large egg yolks**
- ¼ teaspoon table salt**
- ⅔ cup granulated sugar**
- 1 tablespoon dark rum (such as Myers’s)**
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract**
- ¼ cup cornstarch (spooned into a dry measure and leveled)**
- 3 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into pieces**

Heat the milk in a heavy 3-quart saucepan over medium heat until very hot. If a skin forms on the milk’s surface, remove it. Meanwhile, beat the eggs, egg yolks, and salt in a medium bowl with an electric hand mixer on medium-high speed until slightly thickened, about 3 minutes. With the mixer on medium-high speed, add the sugar, 2 to 3 tablespoons at a time, beating about 30 seconds between additions. Continue beating until the mixture is very thick and pale, about another 3 minutes. On low speed, beat in the rum, vanilla, and cornstarch until smooth. Still on low speed, slowly add the hot milk, just a few dribbles at first and then in tablespoon-size dollops, beating after each addition only until smooth.

Scrape the mixture into the saucepan used to heat the milk and add the cold butter pieces. Set the pan over medium heat and stir constantly and gently with a heatproof rubber spatula, scraping all across the bottom and around the sides of the pan. As the mixture heats, it will thicken first at the bottom of the pan, and the mixture will look very lumpy. Decrease the heat slightly and keep stirring as the entire mixture approaches the boiling point and becomes even thicker and lumpier. Switch to a whisk and stir (don’t beat) to smooth the pastry cream. The custard won’t actually boil because it’s so thick. When very thick and smooth (after 7 to 8 minutes), reduce the heat to very low and continue stirring gently with the rubber spatula all over the bottom and sides of the pan for another 1 minute.

Remove the pan from the heat and immediately scrape the custard into a medium bowl. Lay a piece of plastic wrap directly on the custard’s surface, let cool to room temperature, and then refrigerate overnight.

Rum Syrup

Yields a generous ½ cup.

- ⅓ cup warm water**
- ¼ cup granulated sugar**
- 2 tablespoons dark rum (such as Myers’s)**

Stir the warm water and sugar together in a small bowl until the sugar is dissolved. Stir in the rum. Let cool and then cover until ready to use.

late glaze on the cream pie. The marriage of a homey dessert and a fancy confection was complete, almost 100 years after the Parker House Chocolate Cream Pie made its debut.

But gone were the buttersponge cake, the rum, the fondant icing, and the almonds. So when I set out to create a recipe honoring the showstopping original (but one that could be reproduced at home), I brought back the butter sponge cake, the rum-flavored pastry cream, and the almond-studded sides, but I replaced the fondants with an easy chocolate ganache and confectioners’ sugar icing.

Assembling a Boston Cream Pie

Boston Cream Pie

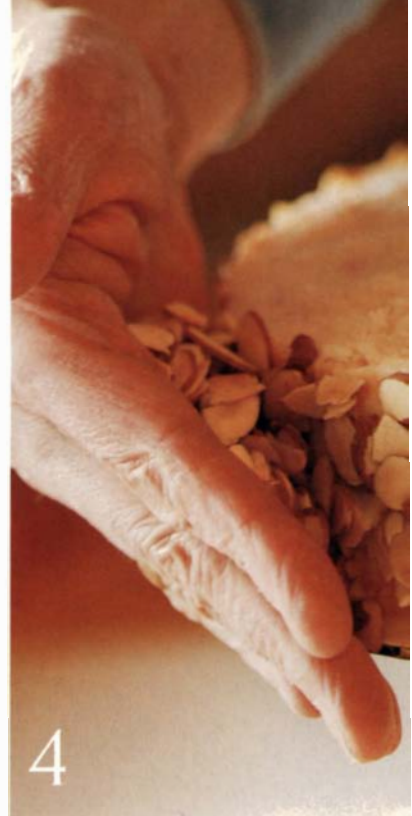
Serves twelve.

- 1 recipe Pastry Cream (p. 65), well chilled (remove from the refrigerator and whisk gently to make it smooth)
- 1 recipe French Sponge Cake (p. 68), split into two layers
- 1 recipe Rum Syrup (p. 65)
- 1 cup toasted sliced almonds
- 1 recipe Chocolate Ganache (at far right)
- 1 recipe White Icing (at far right)

Make the components in the order indicated in the timeline on p. 65. Assemble the cake, following the directions and photos here, and refrigerate until serving time for at least 1 hour and up to 6 hours.



2 Use a pastry brush to dab half of the rum syrup all over the cake.



4 Supporting the cake in your hand, hold it over a sheet tray or a piece of parchment and gently press the almonds all around the sides of the cake. The nuts that don't stick will fall into the tray or onto the parchment. You won't use all the nuts; snack on the leftovers.



1 Dot a bit of pastry cream in the center of a 10-inch cardboard disk (or the removable bottom of a 10-inch tart pan) and set the bottom cake layer, cut side up, on the disk. The pastry cream will hold it in place. (If you have a cake turntable, set the disk on that. Otherwise, put the disk on a large cakeplate or cake stand.)



3 Reserve $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the pastry cream and spread the remainder on the top of the cake. The layer of pastry cream will be about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. Set the second cake layer over the cream, and dab on the remaining rum syrup. With a narrow metal spatula, spread the reserved pastry cream all around the sides of the cake.



5 Using two large offset spatulas, carefully transfer the cake from the cardboard disk onto a cake plate or cake stand. Pour the warm ganache (if it has started to firm up, warm it gently in a heavy saucepan) onto the center of the top of the cake without letting any run down the sides.

6 Carefully spread the ganache with a large metal icing spatula right to the edges of the cake.

7 Scrape the white icing into a zip-top bag, seal, and cut a tiny hole in one corner of the bag to pipe it. Squeeze the icing over the ganache in a decorative pattern like a crosshatch or zigzag. Refrigerate the cake for at least 1 hour. To slice, see the instructions on p. 68.



Chocolate Ganache

Yields about 1 cup.

1/3 cup heavy cream
7 ounces bittersweet or semi-sweet chocolate, chopped

In a heavy 1-quart saucepan, bring the cream just to a boil over medium heat. Add the chopped chocolate and stir with a small wire whisk. Take the pan off the heat and stir occasionally as the chocolate melts. The ganache should be perfectly smooth. Let cool slightly before using. If it cools beyond a pourable consistency, warm it gently in a heavy saucepan.



White Icing

Yields 2 tablespoons.

1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
(scoop a dry measure into the sugar container; level it with a metal spatula)
2 1/4 teaspoons very hot water

In a small bowl, whisk together the sugar and water. The icing should have a smooth, creamy consistency that's a bit thinner than honey; add a few more drops of water if needed.



Slice Boston cream pie while it's still cool

Twenty or thirty minutes before serving, remove the assembled cake from the refrigerator. Run a sharp knife under hot water and wipe it dry before slicing. You may have to make several progressively deeper cuts (heating the knife each time) to cut through the chocolate without cracking the top. The rest of the cake cuts easily. Put portions on dessert plates and let stand at room temperature for about 20 minutes before serving. Refrigerate any leftovers for up to two days.

French Butter Sponge Cake

Yields two 10-inch split cake layers.

2 ounces (¼ cup) unsalted butter;
more for the pan

All-purpose flour for the pan

3¾ ounces cake flour (scant 1 cup,
spooned into a dry measure)

7 large eggs, separated

1 cup granulated sugar

2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

¼ teaspoon table salt

Position a rack in the lower third of the oven; heat the oven to 325°F. Melt the butter in a small saucepan over medium-low heat and set it aside to cool. It must be no hotter than tepid when used.

Butter the bottom of a 10-inch spring-form pan and line it with a round of parchment or waxed paper; butter the paper. Dust the inside of the pan with all-purpose flour; knock out any excess. Sift the cake flour three times onto a sheet of waxed paper, return the flour to the sifter, and set the sifter on the waxed paper.

Beat the egg yolks until "ribbony":

Using the whip attachment on your mixer, whip the yolks on medium-high speed until thickened, about 3 minutes. Continue beating on medium high and gradually add ½ cup of the sugar, about 2 tablespoons at a time; beat for 20 to 30 seconds between additions. You may need to stop to scrape the bowl occasionally. Beat on high speed until very thick and pale, about another 3 minutes. When the whip is raised, the yolks should fall into the bowl and form a slowly dissolving ribbon. Beat in the vanilla. Scrape the

mixture into a large, wide bowl. Wash and dry the mixing bowl and the whip.

Whip the egg whites: Combine the egg whites with the salt in the bowl of the mixer and begin mixing on medium low until frothy, about 1 minute. Increase the speed to medium and mix until the whip leaves distinct traces in the whites and forms peaks that curl softly at their tips when the beater is raised, about 4 minutes. With the mixer running on medium, gradually add the remaining ½ cup sugar, about 2 tablespoons at a time, beating for 20 to 30 seconds between additions. Continue beating on medium to medium-high speed until the whites hold a firm shape and form peaks that curl only very slightly at their tips, another 1 to 2 minutes. Don't beat until the whites form stiff, unwavering upright peaks.

Check the melted butter to be sure it's tepid (about 95°F) and liquid. The butter must not be at room temperature or it won't blend into the batter properly. If necessary, rewarm it briefly.

Fold the whites into the yolks:

Scoop about a quarter of the whites over the yolk mixture and fold together gently with a few broad strokes of a large rubber spatula to lighten the mixture. Rotate the bowl a bit with each fold, and don't be too thorough at this point: It's all right if streaks of white remain. Sift about a third of the cake flour over the mixture and scoop about a third of the remaining whites over the flour. Fold together gently, turning the bowl as you go; but again, don't be too thorough. Sift half of the remaining flour and scoop half of the

remaining whites onto the batter and fold in the same manner. Sift on the last of the flour and add the last of the whites; fold gently but thoroughly, only until the batter is an even yellow color.

Fold in the melted butter: Drizzle half of the tepid butter on top of the batter and partially incorporate it quickly with three or four broad strokes, turning the bowl a little with each fold. Pour on the remaining butter and fold it in only until no butter shows. Carefully scrape the batter into the prepared pan (the pan will be about half full), spread it evenly, and put the pan in the oven immediately.

Bake the cake: Bake until the cake is golden brown and springs back when gently pressed, about 40 minutes; don't overbake. Let the cake cool in the pan on a rack for 10 minutes. Run a sharp knife around the edge to release the cake from the sides; unclasp and remove the side of the pan. Invert the cake onto a rack and remove the bottom of the pan and the paper liner. Replace the paper on the cake bottom, cover with another rack, and invert. Let cool completely, right side up. (If storing, wrap the cake tightly in plastic when completely cool. Wait to cut the cake until just before assembling.)

When ready to assemble the dessert, trim a very thin layer off the top of the cake with a sharp serrated knife to expose the cake's interior porous structure (you may need to cut as much as ¼ inch off the top if the cake is slightly domed). Slice the cake in half horizontally with the serrated knife (each layer will be about ¾ inch thick) and set the layers aside.

Greg Patent is the author of Baking in America, which won the James Beard award for best baking book of 2003. ♦

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READER SERVICE NO. 42

BY JENNIFER ARMENTROUT

I'm not the biggest fan of cold weather, but this year, when the flurries start to fly, my consolation will be making some of the great recipes in this issue for my friends and family. Slow-roasted beef tenderloin (p. 42) will be headlining my Christmas Eve

From Christmas to New Year's, I know what recipes I'll be making

menu, and I expect the mostly make-ahead marinated chicken dishes (p. 50) to mean the difference between a home-cooked meal and carryout after a busy shopping day. In this edition of From Our

Test Kitchen, you'll find bonus information to help you get perfect results from these and other recipes in this issue, plus we share the results of our balsamic vinegar tasting. I've also included a Technique Class on cooking duck breast, a simple but special cut of meat that I'll be serving on New Year's Eve.

Balsamico: What's in a name?



The word "tradizionale" on the label means it's the real thing.

While researching our balsamic vinegar Tasting Panel (see p. 76), we found a dizzying array of choices on supermarket shelves. Interestingly, all those vinegars were inspired by a delicacy too pricey for the average grocery store.

Aceto balsamico tradizionale hails from Modena, a province in the northern Italian region of Emilia-Romagna, where it's crafted today exactly as it has been for centuries. Artisans crush sugary white grapes and simmer the juice, or must, in an open vat to concentrate the sugars. The cooked must is then filtered and poured into casks to ferment into vinegar. During the next twelve years (at the very least), the vinegar is ushered through a series of increasingly smaller wooden barrels. The result is a concentrated sweet-sour syrup, more like aged

Port than vinegar. Only the best examples of artisan-made balsamico, as decided by a consortium of tasters, wear the word *tradizionale* on the label. Bottles cost from \$50 to \$500 (for a mail-order source, see p. 78). When something's this good, you don't need much: Drizzle a bit over risotto, sprinkle a few drops on ripe fruit, or sip a thimbleful after dinner.

If you're looking for an ingredient to splash into marinades and weeknight vinaigrettes, supermarket-shelf balsamics, like the ones we tested, are the better choice. Although they're mostly red-wine vinegar, sweetened and darkened with cooked grape juice or caramel coloring and flavoring (or both), we've found that some are quite good.

—Kimberly Y. Masibay, associate editor

What's in a "pinch"?

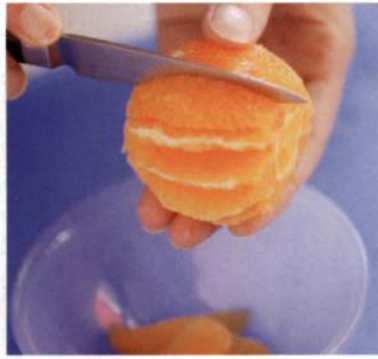
You see it all the time in recipes: a pinch of cayenne, a pinch of nutmeg, a pinch of this, a pinch of that...but just what is a pinch? Is it the amount that you can pick up between two fingers—your thumb and forefinger—or do you involve a third or even a fourth finger? Technically, a pinch is $\frac{1}{16}$ teaspoon. You can actually buy a set of measuring spoons that includes this size, but these aren't likely to be found in many kitchen drawers. That's fine, though, because you really don't need them. Pinches are usually reserved for strong ingredients, and while you definitely don't want to overdo it, a pinch is so small that a little variation one way or another isn't likely to spoil the soup. The average person picks up roughly the equivalent of $\frac{1}{16}$ teaspoon by pinching together thumb and forefinger. If a recipe calls for a "big pinch," then it's probably asking for a three-finger pinch.

Getting to the meat of the orange

Oranges are at their best in winter, and orange segments cut free of their tough dividing membranes make a bright addition to salads like the one in this issue's Quick & Delicious (see p. 86C). Some pros refer to these succulent little goodies as orange *suprêmes*. They're simple to prepare with the following technique. This method works for other citrus fruits, too.



1 Slice off the blossom and stem ends of the orange with a small, sharp knife. Stand the orange on one of its cut ends and slice off the skin in strips. Try to get all the bitter white pith, but don't sacrifice too much of the sweet flesh in order to do it.



2 Working over a bowl to catch the juices, cut the orange *suprêmes* free from the membranes, letting each one fall into the bowl as you go. Once all the *suprêmes* are free, squeeze the empty wheel of membranes to get the last of the juice.

How to trim a tenderloin chain



To remove the chain, use your fingers to start pulling it away from the tenderloin, and then use a sharp boning knife to cut it off completely. Finish trimming the tenderloin by removing any remaining fat, membrane, and silverskin.

To make the slow-roasted beef tenderloin on p. 42, you'll probably need to first trim the "chain" from the tenderloin. The chain is a strip of meat that runs the length of the tenderloin. It's good meat, but it's separated from the tenderloin by lots of fat and connective tissue that you don't want to include in your roast. Trim the chain meat and freeze it for another use. From one average tenderloin, you should be able to get enough chain meat to make a beef stroganoff or stir-fry for two or three people. We got 14 ounces of trimmed chain meat from the 6½-pound tenderloin shown here.

Quick-cooking Lentils

Lentils have a lot going for them. They don't need soaking, they cook in about 30 to 45 minutes, they're good for you (soybeans are the only legume with more protein), they have an earthy, slightly sweet and peppery flavor that pairs well with lots of other foods, and they come in a variety of sizes and colors, five of which are shown at right. Common brown lentils and occasionally French lentils can be found in supermarkets; you can find the others in specialty stores, international groceries, and online. See p. 78 for mail-order sources.

French green

also called *lentilles du Puy*, hold their shape well and make an attractive salad or warm side dish. They're especially nice as a bed for fatty fish like tuna and salmon.

Common brown

are the mainstay of traditional lentil soup because they tend to fall apart and thicken the soup.

Beluga

so called because of their resemblance to caviar, hold their shape well, and go well with fish, particularly salmon because their colors contrast beautifully.

Split red

also called *pink lentils* and in India, *masoor dal*, become very soft when cooked, making them ideal for soups and purées.

Spanish pardina

also called *Spanish brown lentils*, hold their shape well and make a nice accompaniment to chicken, duck, and game birds.

Cook duck at home...it's easy

One of the best-selling dishes at a restaurant where I once worked was a pan-roasted duck breast. I'm sure its popularity was due mainly to the fact that although lots of people love duck, they rarely think to cook it at home. Well, here's a secret that restaurants probably don't want you to know: *Duck is just as easy to cook as chicken.* The only difference is that duck skin is pretty fatty, and you have to cook it in a way that lets most of the fat render, or melt away. Once you learn the basic technique, it's easy to vary the pan sauce ingredients to suit your mood. Just keep in mind that the richness of duck is best complemented by sweet, sour, and pungent flavors.

Trim the duck

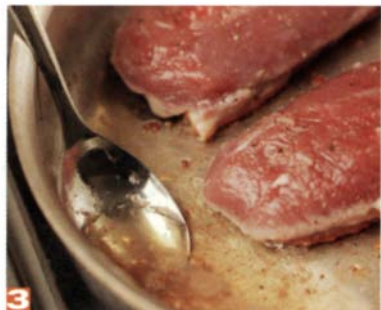


1 Trim excess skin but leave about 1/4 inch of overhang to offset shrinkage during cooking.



2 Score the skin to let the fat render and allow the skin to crisp.

Sear the duck



3 The duck will give off as much as 1/2 cup fat as it sears. Spoon off the fat as it accumulates.



4 When the skin looks crisp and turns deep golden brown, turn the breasts over and put the pan in the oven.

Pan-Roasted Duck Breasts with Sherry, Honey & Thyme Sauce

Serves four.

You can dress up this dish by adding a few dried figs, if you like. Trim off the stems and, depending on their size, halve or quarter them. Soak the figs in the sherry for 10 minutes and then drain them, reserving the sherry. Add the sherry as directed and add the figs to the sauce along with the broth.

- 4 boneless skin-on duck breast halves (about 2 pounds total)**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 1/4 cup dry sherry**
- 1/4 cup sherry vinegar**
- 1/2 cup homemade or low-salt canned chicken broth**
- 2 teaspoons honey**
- 1 teaspoon lightly chopped fresh thyme**
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter**

Heat the oven to 425°F. Rinse the duck breasts and pat dry. Trim any silverskin from the meat side of the breasts. Scrape the tendon out of the tender, if it's still attached, and pat the tender back in place.

Trim the edges of the skin so there's about 1/4 inch overhang

1. With a sharp chef's or boning knife, score the skin in a 1/2-inch crosshatch pattern **2**. Try to cut only through the skin and not into the meat. Season the breasts on both sides with salt and pepper.

Heat a large ovenproof sauté pan or skillet (don't use nonstick) over medium-high heat for 1 minute. Put the duck in the pan, skin side down, and let it sear. As fat collects in the pan, spoon it off once or twice **3**. When the skin turns medium brown, after about 6 minutes, reduce the heat to medium. Continue to cook until much of the fat is rendered from the duck and the skin looks crisp and deep golden brown, another 2 to 4 minutes **4**.

Flip the breasts skin side up, spoon off any remaining fat, and put the pan in the oven. Roast until the duck is cooked to your liking: 3 to 4 minutes for medium rare and 5 to 6 minutes for

medium well. To check for doneness, cut into a breast or use an instant-read thermometer: 135°F for medium rare, 155°F for medium well (see the sidebar at far right).

Transfer the duck to a plate or platter and tent with foil to keep warm. Set the pan on medium-high heat and pour in the sherry and sherry vinegar. Immediately scrape the pan with a wooden spoon to release any cooked-on bits. Boil until the liquid has reduced to about 2 tablespoons, about 3 minutes. Add the broth, honey, thyme, and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Boil until the liquid is reduced by about half, about 3 minutes. Reduce the heat to low and blend the butter into the sauce by constantly stirring or swirling the pan. Slice the duck thinly on an angle, arrange it on heated plates, and spoon the sauce over or around it. Serve right away.

Buying duck breast:

What you'll find at the market

There are three types of duck breast that you're likely to find at your market. The white pekin (a.k.a Long Island) duck boasts tender, mild-flavored meat. Muscovy duck breasts tend to be slightly larger and more strongly flavored than white pekin. Moulard ducks, which are a cross between a female pekin and a male muscovy, are mainly raised for their livers (foie gras), but moulard breasts, called *magrets*, are considered a delicacy by those who prize their large size and steak-like eating qualities—and are willing to overlook their occasional tendency to be stringy.

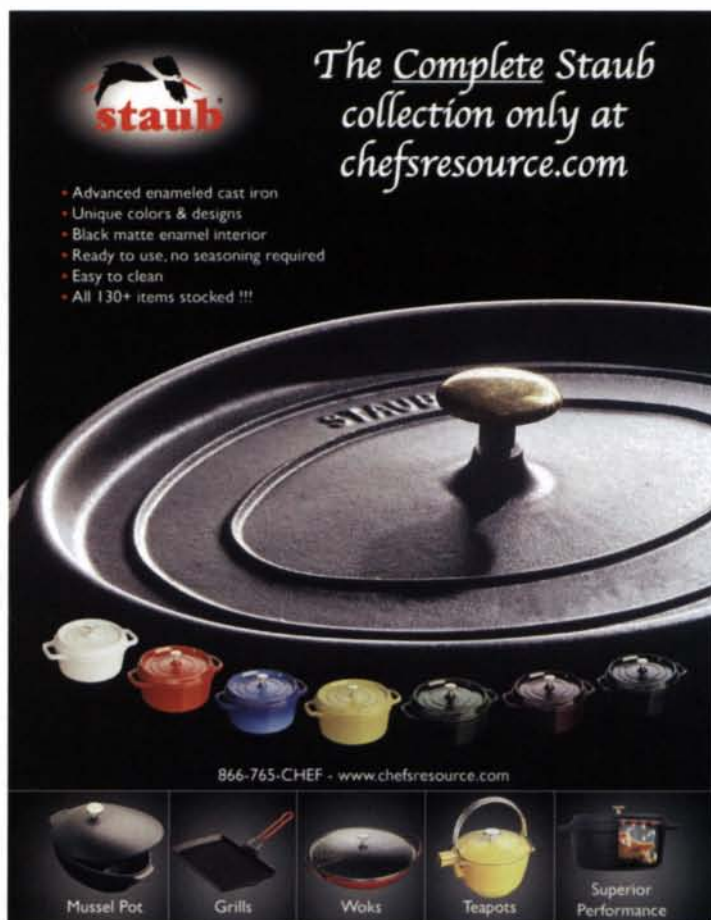
Most ducks are sent to market when they're still young, so expect the terms "duck" and "duckling" to be used interchangeably. White pekin is the most common variety in the average supermarket, followed by muscovy. If the package doesn't specify a variety, chances are that it's white pekin. Moulard breasts are more of a gourmet-store specialty item. The recipe at left was developed using pekin duck, but it will work for muscovy and moulard, too; just be prepared to increase the cooking time a bit. For mail-order duck sources, see Where to Buy It, p. 78.

Cooking duck breast: Is medium rare safe?

As with any poultry, there's always the chance that duck harbors harmful bacteria. But cooking duck is different than cooking chicken and turkey because it's actually a red meat. As with other red meats, some people prefer to eat duck that's cooked medium or medium rare so it's still pink inside.

The official food safety word from the USDA is that duck breast should be cooked to at least 160°F and preferably to 170°F. If you cook a duck breast to 155°F (assuming that carryover cooking will continue to raise the temperature to 160°F as the duck rests), it will be medium well—safe to eat and still a little pink in the center, but perhaps a tad drier than you might like. If you're pregnant or if you have a compromised immune system, this is the route you should take.

But if you prefer your duck a little pinker, cook it to 135° or 140°F and enjoy a medium-rare to medium duck breast. It isn't guaranteed safe, but if you like your duck a little more juicy and tender, you might consider the slight risk to be worthwhile.



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READER SERVICE NO. 10

ingredient

Tahini

Have you ever wondered what gives Middle Eastern dips like baba ghanouj (eggplant dip) and hummus (chickpea dip) their wonderfully rich and creamy qualities? The answer is tahini, a paste made of ground sesame seeds. It has a rich, nutty flavor that helps to amplify the flavors of other foods. Full of B vitamins, calcium, phosphorus, and iron, it's also good for you. Get to know tahini by trying it in the hummus recipe at right or in the Triple-Sesame Marinated Chicken recipe on p. 51.

What and where to buy: Imported and domestic tahini is sold in cans and jars at natural-foods stores and some supermarkets (look in the international or natural-foods section or next to the peanut butter). A good domestic brand to look for is Joyva, made in Brooklyn, New York. If you can't find tahini locally, see Where to Buy It, p. 78, for a mail-order source.

How to store it: Tahini keeps almost indefinitely when stored in a cool, dark cupboard. It doesn't require refrigeration (sesame oil, unlike other nut oils, is high in antioxidants), although you can keep it in the fridge if you like (just let it return to room temperature before using). Because it contains no emulsifiers, the sesame oil tends to separate from the solids over time, but it will remix on its own if you turn the can or jar upside down about 30 minutes before you plan to use it.



Hummus with Mellow Garlic & Cumin

Yields about 3 cups.

Tahini blends with chickpeas, lemon, olive oil, and garlic to become the well-known Middle Eastern dip and spread known as hummus. Homemade hummus is simple to make, and it tastes much better than the mediocre and overpriced stuff sold in supermarkets. To avoid the most common pitfall of homemade hummus—way too much raw garlic—I like to gently cook the garlic in the olive oil first so it mellows and infuses the oil. Cumin and a touch of soy sauce give the hummus a savory edge. Serve with seedless cucumber rounds or pita chips or triangles for dipping.

- 1/3 cup plus 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil**
- 4 large cloves garlic, thinly sliced**
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin**
- 2 15½-ounce cans chickpeas, drained and rinsed**
- 3 tablespoons tahini**
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice; more to taste**
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce**
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt; more as needed**

Combine the 1/3 cup oil with the garlic and cumin in a small

saucepan. Set over medium-low heat and cook until the garlic softens, about 3 minutes from when you can hear the garlic bubbling quickly. Don't let the garlic brown. Take the pan off the heat and let cool completely.

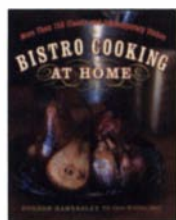
Put the chickpeas, tahini, lemon juice, soy sauce, and salt in a food processor. Use a fork to fish the softened garlic out of the oil and transfer it to the processor (reserve the oil). Turn the machine on, let it run for about 20 seconds, and then start slowly pouring the cumin oil through the machine's feed tube. Be sure to scrape the pan with a rubber spatula to get all of the cumin and oil. Pour 1/4 cup cool water down the tube. Stop the machine, scrape the sides of the bowl, and continue processing until the hummus is creamy and almost smooth. Season to taste with more salt and lemon juice, if you like. For best results, let the hummus sit at room temperature for an hour or two before serving so the flavors can meld. Or better yet, make it a day ahead, refrigerate it, return it to room temperature, and adjust the seasonings before serving. To serve, spread the hummus in a shallow dish and drizzle with the remaining 1 tablespoon oil. It keeps for about a week in the refrigerator.

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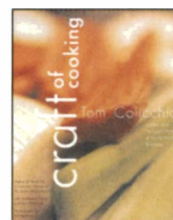
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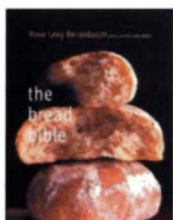
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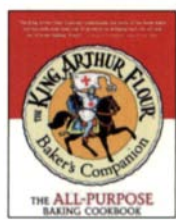
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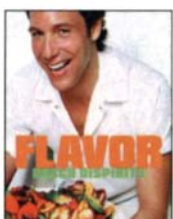
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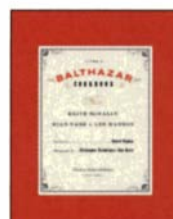
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tasting panel

Balsamic vinegar

Twenty years ago, few people outside of Italy had heard of balsamic vinegar. Now it's a pantry staple that's whisked into vinaigrettes, splashed into soups, and used for deglazing. Considering this tangy ingredient's popularity, we thought it would be useful to find out how flavors vary among some of the versions you're likely to see in your grocery store. (For the differences between supermarket balsamic and balsamico tradizionale, see p. 70.) So we held a blind tasting of seven nationally available brands under \$15. Our tasters evaluated the vinegars' aroma, flavor, and overall likability. There wasn't one clear winner that blew us all away, but two stood out as a cut above—the best bets for drizzling directly onto salad greens or sliced tomatoes, if you're so inclined. Read on to find out which brands might suit your tastes. —K. Y. M.

top picks

Listed in order of preference; prices will vary.



MONARI FEDERZONI

\$10.99 for 8.5 ounces (\$1.29 per ounce)

"The most nuanced and interesting of the bunch," noted one taster. Not to

be confused with Monari's widely available green-label balsamic, this small-batch vinegar had balanced sweetness and acidity. And it delivered layer after layer of flavor—ripe cherry, stewed prunes, hints of wood. Sold in supermarkets nationwide.



FINI

\$7.99 for 8.8 ounces (91¢ per ounce)

Tasters were fond of this aromatic vinegar's pleasant figgy sweetness and acidic kick. But some tasters

found the flavors mild and thin: "they seem to float on top of a vinegar base." It's fine for vinaigrettes and for deglazing. Contains caramel color. Sold in Whole Foods markets and in some supermarkets.

RUNNERS-UP

Balsamic vinegars numbered in order of preference.



3 LUCINI

\$11.79 for 8.5 ounces (\$1.39 per ounce)

Tasters were divided on this sprightly, full-bodied vinegar. Some praised its complexity—notes of evergreen, cherry, grape, apple, spice—and mouthwatering acidic zip; others faulted it for being "rough around the edges" and "like a Sweet-Tart." Sold in supermarkets nationwide.



4 COLAVITA

\$3.49 for 16.9 ounces (21¢ per ounce)

This assertive vinegar offered up-front sweetness and hints of cherry, dried fig, and spice. One pleased taster found it "rich and tangy with lots of tingle," but others thought it needed more sweetness to balance the "sharp, vinegary acidity." Sold in supermarkets nationwide.



5 ROLAND

\$2.19 for 8.5 ounces (26¢ per ounce)

For tangy-sweet, wine-grapy flavor and acidity that doesn't linger, this is it. Not the most complex or assertive of the bunch, but one taster thought it was right on target: "This is what I expect and hope for when I open a bottle of balsamic." Sold in supermarkets nationwide.



6 MODENACETI

\$3.49 for 16.9 ounces (21¢ per ounce)

This aromatic vinegar's acidity was too high-pitched for most tasters, but some found its straightforward brightness quite refreshing. Sold in supermarkets nationwide.



7 ZO

\$10 for 6.76 ounces (\$1.48 per ounce)

Although some tasters really liked this concentrated ten-year-old vinegar's fruitiness, spiciness, and subtle tang, several tasters downgraded it for being one-dimensional and "a bit cloying." Sold in Whole Foods markets and specialty-food stores nationwide.



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Menus, p. 8

As an alternative to sweet desserts, aged cheeses make a great ending to a meal. We adore the rich, complex flavor of **Cowgirl Creamery's** Red Hawk cheese, an organic, washed-rind triple crème available in 8-ounce rounds. And we're not the only ones: Red Hawk won "best of show" at this year's American Cheese Society annual conference. To order, call 415-663-9335. We also like Vermont's **Grafton Gold Super-Aged Cheddar**, aged for 30 to 36 months. Grafton Cheddar is available in some supermarkets, or call 800-472-3866.

In Season, p. 16

Common rosemary and water-absorbing polymer crystals are readily available at most good garden centers. Mail-order herb nurseries with a good selection of rosemary cultivars include **Shady Acres Herb Farm** (952-466-3391; www.shadyacres.com), **The Thyme Garden** (541-487-8671; www.thymegarden.com), and **Well-Sweep Herb Farm** (908-852-5390; www.wellsweep.com).

Kitchen Detail, p. 30

Cabinetmaker **Bo Williams** (415-884-0503) designed the layout, cabinet work, and counters in Dave McElroy's kitchen. The drainer (no. PR31C) and sink (no. PRX610) are made by **Franke**; for information, visit www.franke.com.

Savory Coins, p. 38

For finely grated lemon zest, try using a Microplane zester from **Cooking.com** (800-663-8810); prices range from \$9.95 to 11.95.

Macaroni & Cheese, p. 60

For Apilco gratin dishes like the ones pictured in the Baked Pasta with Cream & Parmigiano Reggiano recipe, visit **Apilcodepot.com**. The site carries various dish sizes, including 7-inch round (\$15.99).



Chef vs. Chef: Beef Tenderloin, p. 41

An instant-read thermometer with a probe and separate base makes it easy to cook meat perfectly every time. **Amazon.com** sells Polder models starting at \$19.99, and **Target** (www.target.com) carries a Taylor model for \$16.99.

To make the potatoes mousse-line, try Oxo's potato ricer,

\$19.99, at **Bed, Bath & Beyond** (www.bedbathandbeyond.com; 800-462-3966).

From Our Test Kitchen, p. 70

You can find tahini, a paste made from ground sesame seeds, in local supermarkets and health-food stores. For mail-order sources, try **Adriana's Caravan** (www.adrianascaravan.com; 800-316-0820) or **Sultan's Delight** (www.sultansdelight.com; 800-852-5046).

Mail-order sources for *tradicionale balsamicos* include **Chefshop.com** (877-337-2491) and **Zingerman's** (888-636-8162; www.zingermans.com).

For muscovy and moulard (*magret*) duck breasts, contact **Joie de Vivre** (209-869-0788). For white pekin duck, visit **Mapleleafarms.com**.

For various types of lentils, try **Kalustyan's** (800-352-3451; www.kalustyans.com) or **Phipps Country Store & Farm** (650-879-0787; www.phippscountry.com).

Boston Cream Pie, p. 64

To make cake decorating easier, order an Ateco plastic (\$18.50) or metal (\$57.00) revolving cake stand from **A Cook's Wares** (www.cookswares.com; 800-915-9788). The company also carries 10-inch springform pans starting from \$8.50. For 10-inch cardboard cake rounds, call **New York Cake Supplies** at 800-942-2539.



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Chef's Choice Sharpener	43	www.chefschoice.com	p. 17
Chef's Choice Slicer	42	www.chefschoice.com	p. 69
Chef's Resource.com		www.chefsresource.com	p. 19
Chef's Resource.com		www.chefsresource.com	p. 73
Chesapeake Bay Gourmet	24	www.cbhgourmet.com	p. 13
Classic Cookers		www.classiccookers.com	p. 83
Complements to the Chef	72	www.complementstothechef.com	p. 12
Cook Street	10	www.cookstreet.com	p. 73
Cookbooks by Morris Press	8	www.morriscookbooks.com	p. 81
Cookinpro 3.0	27	www.cookinpro.com	p. 81
Cuisinshop.com	55	www.cuisinshop.com	p. 9
Culinary Parts Unlimited	127	www.culinaryparts.com	p. 29
Culinary Vacations, Inc.	75	www.culinaryvacationsinc.com	p. 83
Cutlery and More.com	133	www.cutleryandmore.com	p. 3
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1st in Coffee	130	www.1stincoffee.com	p. 12
Farm-2-Market	119	www.f2m.com	p. 29
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Finales Gourmet Desserts	66	www.finalesgourmetdesserts.com	p. 27
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Millie's Pierogi	28	www.milliespierogi.com	p. 82
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- 4 ounces unsweetened baking chocolate
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 4 large eggs, room temperature
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon espresso powder
- 1/4 cup Dutch-process cocoa
- 1 cup King Arthur Unbleached
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- 1/2 cup chocolate chips

Melt the baking chocolate and butter over low heat or in a microwave. Let it cool, then mix it with the sugar, salt and baking powder. Add the eggs, vanilla, espresso powder, and cocoa, beating till fluffy. Mix in the flour and chips, stirring until well combined. Spoon the batter into a lightly greased 2-quart pudding mold; it will fill the mold about half full. Cover with the lid and place into a large pot of simmering water. Cover the pot and steam the cake for 1 hour, 15 minutes. Turn the heat off and allow to sit, still in the covered pot, for 15 minutes. Remove the mold from the hot water, remove the lid, and allow the cake to cool for 1 hour. Turn the cake out onto a serving plate. Cool for several more hours. To serve, slice with a serrated knife, dipping it in hot water between each slice. Yield: 16 to 20 rich servings.

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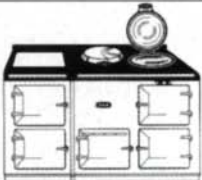
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APPETIZERS

Black Bean & Goat Cheese Quesadillas with Guacamole, 62:86C
Bruschetta, 58:41
Bruschetta with Anchoiade with Figs & Walnuts, 58:43
Bruschetta with Chopped Tomato, Garlic & Basil, 58:41
Bruschetta with Fresh Ricotta, Lemon, Pepper & Mint, 58:43
Bruschetta with Rustic Green Olive Tapenade, 58:42
Bruschetta with Warm Herbed Goat Cheese, 58:42
Cheddar-Cayenne Coins, 62:39
Chinese-Style Spareribs, 56:59
Cilantro-Lime Guacamole, 58:22
Crostini, 61:98C
Crostini with Beef & Horseradish Cream, 61:98C
Crostini with Sautéed Mushrooms, Mint & Parmigiano, 61:98C
Crostini with White Bean Purée, Spinach & Sun-Dried Tomatoes, 61:98C
Crunchy Roasted Pepitas, 60:48
Dolmades Yialantzi (Grape Leaves Stuffed with Rice & Herbs), 59:29
Eggplant Caviar, 59:17
Goat Cheese, Pesto & Sun-Dried Tomato Terrine, 61:98C
Golden Onion & Thyme Dip, 61:98C
Grilled Old Bay Shrimp with Lemony Horseradish Cocktail Sauce, 59:44
Grilled Sesame Chicken Wings, 59:82C
Grilled Shrimp "Margarita" with Avocados & Garden Tomatoes, 59:45
Hummus with Mellow Garlic & Cumin, 62:74
Pita Chips, 61:98C
Prosciutto with Marinated Melon, 59:52

Rosemary-Parmesan Coins, 62:40
Salt & Pepper Crusted Shrimp with Two Dipping Sauces, 59:43
Sesame Coins, 62:40
Slow-Cooked Memphis Ribs with Barbecue Sauce, 56:59
Smoked Salmon & Dill Mascarpone Toasts, 61:98C
Spiced Shrimp & Avocado Toasts, 61:98C
Spicy Southwestern Bloody Marys, 56:50
Steamed Artichokes with Dipping Butters, 57:59
Tostones (Pan-Fried Green Plantains), 56:29
Toast Points, 61:98C
Toast Points with Black Olive Tapenade & Red Pepper Curls, 61:98C

BEEF & LAMB

Asian-Style Beef Short Ribs, 60:49
Beef Stroganoff with Cremini & Porcini Mushrooms, 57:44
Beef Tenderloin Roasted in a Salt Crust, 62:44
Beer-Braised Sirloin Tips with Mushroom Sauce, 60:54
Grilled Top Sirloin, 58:36
Lamb Skewers with Green Olive & Mint Sauce, 59:82C
Orange-Chile Stir-Fry, 56:72
Seared Beef Tenderloin with Arugula & Mushrooms, 58:60
Seared Rib-Eye with Montreal Spice Mix, 57:86C
Seared Strip Steak with Lemony Couscous Tabbouleh, 56:82C
Slow-Cooked Pot Roast with Mustard & Horseradish Gravy, 56:70
Slow-Roasted Beef Tenderloin with Thyme, 62:42
Spicy Meatballs with Fragrant Tomato Sauce, 62:86C

BEVERAGES

Bittersweet Hot Chocolate, 61:18E
Honeydew Lemonade, 58:71
Mojito, 59:70

BREADS, ROLLS & SCONES

Cheddar & Black Pepper Dinner Rolls, 61:72
Cherry-Vanilla Scones, 61:63
Chocolate Chunk Scones, 61:63
Classic Cream Scones, 61:63
Double Ginger Scones, 61:64
Dinner Rolls, 61:72
Herb Dinner Rolls, 61:72
Herbed Buttermilk Biscuits, 56:52
Poppyseed Dinner Rolls, 61:72
Savory Rosemary Scones, 61:65

CHICKEN, DUCK & TURKEY

Chicken Cacciatore with Sautéed Mushrooms & Zucchini, 56:37
Chicken Roulades Stuffed with Goat Cheese & Sun-Dried Tomatoes, 62:86C
Chicken Piccata with Fried Capers, 56:82C
Chicken Stew with Spinach, Potatoes & Porcini, 56:39
Chicken Stir-Fry with Sesame-Soy Sauce, 58:54
Chicken Thighs with Sausage & Braised Fennel, 56:40
Chicken with Lemon Rosemary Balsamic Mustard Marinade, 62:51
Chicken with Spanish Honey-Cumin Marinade with Apricots & Olives, 62:51
Chicken with Thai Lemongrass Peanut Marinade, 62:51
Chicken with Triple-Sesame Ginger Marinade, 62:51
Chili-Rubbed Chicken with Avocado-Mango Salsa, 57:86C
Cool Rice Noodles with Chicken, 58:65
Curried Fried Rice with Chicken, 58:64
Grilled Coffee-Brined Chicken Breasts, 59:34
Grilled Soy-Glazed Chicken Thighs & Scallions, 58:86C
Grilled Thai Chicken, 58:63
Herbed Grilled Chicken Breasts, 59:35
Island-Spiced, Pineapple-Glazed Grilled Chicken Breasts, 59:33
Marinated Roast Chicken with Pan Sauce, 62:52
North Indian Chicken Curry, 58:28
Orange-Braised Chicken with Prosciutto, 60:52
Orange-Chile Stir-Fry, 56:72
Pan-Roasted Duck Breasts with Sherry, Honey & Thyme Sauce, 62:72
Roasted Chicken Salad with Fennel & Black Olives, 59:51
Roast Turkey, 60:81
Tex-Mex Chicken Under a Brick, 59:36
Seared Turkey & White Bean Burgers, 58:86C
Southwestern Spiced Chicken & Black Bean Stew, 56:38
Turkey Cakes with Spicy Tomato Salsa, 60:70
Vietnamese Ginger Chicken, 57:32

DESSERTS & PASTRY

Baked Plantains with Brown Sugar & Rum, 56:29
Broiled Grapefruit, 56:52
Chocolate French Toast Sandwiches, 56:82C
Chocolate Pavlova with Tangerine Whipped Cream, 62:55

Ice-Cream Sandwiches, 58:68
Open-Faced Chocolate Banana-Cream Sandwiches, 57:86C
Peach Cobbler with Star Anise, 59:65
Pear & Hazelnut Gratin, 60:50
Pistachio Peach Sundaes in Crisp Phyllo Cups, 59:64
Toffee-Chocolate Candy, 61:11
Vanilla & Ginger Roasted Plum Compote, 59:82C
Zabaglione with Summer Fruit, 58:39

Cakes, Pies & Tarts

Apple Pie with Poached Dried Cherries, 61:59
Boston Cream Pie, 62:66
Brown Sugar & Sour Cream Pumpkin Pie, 61:60
Chocolate Roulade, 61:75-79
Chocolate Sponge Cake, 61:76
Chocolate Strawberry Shortcakes, 58:52
Chocolate Stout Cake, 61:46
Classic Tarte Tatin, 60:65
Cranberry & Almond Bundt Cake, 61:44
Espresso Gingerbread Cake, 61:45
Fastest Fudge Cake, 61:18E
French Butter Sponge Cake, 62:68
Lemon-Poppyseed Shortcakes with Berries, 58:51
Orange-Poppyseed Pound Cake, 61:47
Pâte Brisée, 60:64
Peach Cake with Apricot & Vanilla Glaze, 59:62
Peach-Ginger Galette with Hazelnuts, 59:63
Pear-Cranberry Linzer Tart, 61:61
Pumpkin & Cornmeal Cake with Orange Syrup, 60:78
Pumpkin, Sweet Potato & Coconut Pie, 60:75
Rustic Cranberry-Raisin Tarts, 61:48
Spiced Pumpkin Cheesecake, 60:77
Sticky Toffee Pudding, 61:34
Tender Pie Crust, 60:79
Traditional Strawberry Shortcakes, 58:50
Triple-Chocolate Cheesecake, 57:53

Cookies, Biscotti & Brownies

Almond Shortbread Sandwich Cookies, 61:69
Apricot Coconut Bars, 61:55
Bittersweet Cocoa Brownies, 61:18E
Brown Sugar & Oatmeal Shortbread Cookies, 61:68
Brownie Cream Cheese Bites, 61:54
Chocolate Cherry Coconut Macaroons, 61:84
Chocolate-Dipped Espresso Shortbread Cookies, 61:69

Chocolate Soufflé Cookies, 61:18E
Classic Shortbread Cookies, 61:68
Clove Snaps, 61:16
Cream Cheese Spritz Cookies, 61:51
Ginger Bars, 61:55
Macadamia Lace Cookies, 61:51
Orange Chocolate-Chip Cookies, 61:54
Orange-Hazelnut Shortbread Cookies, 61:69
Potato-Chip Cookies, 61:53
Raspberry Diamonds, 61:52
Thick & Chewy Chocolate-Chip Cookies, 56:55
Thin & Crisp Chocolate-Chip Cookies, 56:55
Triple-Orange Pecan Biscotti, 61:53
Tules, 57:67
Warm Chocolate-Nut Brownie, 58:86C

Dessert Sauces, Fillings & Garnishes

Brown Sugar Whipped Cream, 61:60
Candied Citrus Zest, 61:86
Caramel Sauce, 28
Chocolate Glaze, 61:46; 61:78
Chocolate Ganache, 62:67
Cinnamon Custard Sauce, 61:14
Cinnamon Hot Fudge Sauce, 61:30
Crème Fraîche, 57:74
Espresso Caramel Sauce, 61:28
Espresso Glaze, 61:45
Ganache, 61:18E
Hot Fudge Sauce, 61:30
Mint Hot Fudge Sauce, 61:30
Mocha Roulade Filling, 61:77
Orange-Cardamom Caramel Sauce, 61:28
Orange Glaze, 61:47
Orange-Vanilla Roulade Filling, 61:77
Pastry Cream, 62:65
Peppermint Roulade Filling, 61:77
Raspberry Roulade Filling, 61:77
Rum Syrup, 62:65
Spiced Butter, 61:15
Whipped Cream, 61:79
White Icing, 62:67

Ices

Mango-Lime Granita, 59:47
Pink Lemonade Granita, 59:47
Sangria Granita, 59:47
Strawberry-Balsamic Granita, 59:47
Watermelon Granita, 59:47

Puddings & Parfaits

Chocolate Pots de Crème, 56:66
Coffee-Caramel Pots de Crème, 56:67

Creamy Lemon Parfait, 58:86C
 Individual Orange & Chocolate Bread Puddings, 62:86C
 Lemon Pots de Crème, 56:67
 Pumpkin Bread Pudding, 60:76
 Summer Berry Pudding with Moscato Whipped Cream, 59:53

EGGS

Asparagus & Pancetta Frittata, 58:86C

FISH & SHELLFISH

Brochettes of Salmon & Mushrooms in Velvety Asian Marinade, 57:41
 Broiled Salmon with a Ragoût of Lentils & Root Vegetables, 57:40
 Crisp Cod with Soy-Ginger Dipping Sauce, 56:82C
 Halibut Braised in a Tomato-Fennel Broth, 60:55
 Orange-Chile Stir-Fry, 56:72
 Oven-Braised Salmon in Lemon-Tarragon Crème Fraîche, 57:43
 Poached Halibut in Hot & Sour Broth, 57:86C
 Salmon Hash & Dilled Crème Fraîche, 51
 Salmon in Crisp Rice Paper with Sweet & Spicy Sake Essence, 57:42
 Southwestern Tuna with a Grilled Summer Salad, 58:86C
 Spiced Salmon with Yellow Peppers, 59:82C
 Steamed Mussels in Garlicky White-Wine Broth, 57:86C
 Stir-Fried Shrimp with Spinach & Peanut Noodles, 56:82C

PASTA, RICE & COUSCOUS

Artichoke Risotto with Lemon & Parsley, 57:57
 Baked Pasta with Cream & Parmigiano Reggiano, 62:83
 Broiled Tomatoes with Feta & Herbed Couscous, 58:86C
 Bucatini in a Spicy Tomato Sauce with Crisped Pancetta, 60:98C
 Double-Cheese Penne with Sausage & Hot Cherry Peppers, 56:82C
 Farfalle in a Broth of Wild Mushrooms & Browned Shallots, 60:98C
 Fettuccine with Artichokes, Hazelnuts & Cream, 57:55

Linguine with Clams & Lemon-Garlic Oil, 60:98C
 Luxurious Four-Cheese Macaroni & Cheese, 62:60
 Orecchiette with Caramelized Garlic, Sausage & Broccoli, 60:98C
 Pappardelle with Shrimp & Zucchini, 60:98C
 Pasta with Peas, Arugula & Prosciutto, 58:59
 Risotto with Corn, Tomatoes & Basil, 59:82C
 Risotto-Style Pasta with Peas & Mushrooms, 60:98C
 Rotini with Spiced Tomato & Olive Meat Sauce, 60:98C
 Spaghetti with Pine Nuts, Tomato & Garlic Breadcrumbs, 60:98C
 Spaghetti with Portobellos, Sage & Walnuts, 57:86C
 Tex-Mex Macaroni & Cheese with Green Chiles, 62:62

PORK & HAM

Broiled Ham Steak with a Sweet & Spicy Rosemary Glaze, 59:82C
 Chinese-Style Spareribs, 56:59
 Glazed Pork Roast with Carrots, Parsnips & Pears, 62:86C
 Pork Chops with a Dijon-Rye Crust, 57:86C
 Pork Chops with Sweet Onions & Capers, 60:53
 Sautéed Pork Chops with Grape, Rosemary & Red Wine Pan Sauce, 62:86C
 Slow-Cooked Memphis Ribs & Barbecue Sauce, 56:59

SANDWICHES

Classic Grilled Cheese Sandwich, 57:61
 French-Style Grilled Ham & Gruyère, 57:62
 Grilled Brie Sandwich with Apricot Jam, 57:61
 Grilled Goat Cheese Sandwich with Tapenade, 57:62
 Grilled Mozzarella & Pecorino Sandwich with Tomato & Basil, 57:62

SIDE DISHES

Artichokes with Peas & Prosciutto, 57:58
 Balsamic-Glazed Green Beans, 57:46
 Black Beans with Mango, Citrus, & Jicama, 58:46
 Boiled Basmati Rice, 58:74
 Brussels Sprouts with Bacon & Thyme, 57:47
 Butternut Squash, Apple, Leek & Potato Gratin with a Cheddar Crust, 60:59
 Cauliflower & Green Beans with Indian Spices, 62:49
 Classic Rice Pilaf, 57:51
 Couscous with Cilantro & Melted Scallions, 57:41

Creamed Spinach Amandine, 62:43
 Creamy Goat Cheese Polenta, 57:86C
 Creamy Mashed Yukon Gold Potatoes, 56:47
 Creole Pilaf, 57:51
 Crisp Asian Broccoli, 57:45
 Curried Coconut Pilaf, 57:50
 Green Beans & Radicchio with Shaved Parmesan, 62:47
 Grilled Eggplant Marinated with Mint, 59:52
 Fennel & Red Onion with Arugula, 62:48
 Lemon-Dill Pilaf, 57:50
 Mashed Potatoes with Lemon & Garlic, 60:48
 Mushroom Pilaf, 57:51
 Mushrooms & Spinach with Soppressata Crisps, 62:49
 Oven-Roasted Eggplant, 59:16
 Pink Beans with Roasted Red Pepper, Lemon & Herbs, 58:47
 Potatoes Mousseline, 62:43
 Quick-Roasted Beet Slices, 56:42
 Red Potato, Cabbage & Bacon Gratin, 60:61
 Roasted Baby Squash, Carrots & Potatoes, 60:84
 Roasted Butternut Squash, 60:18
 Sautéed Swiss Chard, 60:56
 Sautéed Swiss Chard with Anchovies, Parmesan & Breadcrumbs, 60:57
 Sautéed Swiss Chard with Ginger & Peanuts, 60:57
 Sautéed Swiss Chard with Gremolata, 60:57
 Sautéed Swiss Chard with Slivered Almonds & Browned Butter, 60:57
 Sautéed Swiss Chard with Sun-Dried Tomatoes & Feta, 60:57
 Seared Asparagus with Lemon & Parmesan Curls, 57:46
 Shallots Braised in Red Wine, 58:37
 Skillet-Roasted Rosemary Potatoes, 62:18
 Slow-Roasted Beet Wedges, 56:43
 Smashed Red-Skinned Potatoes with Boursin & Scallions, 56:47
 Spanish Braised Spinach with Chickpeas, 56:82C
 Steamed Jasmine Rice, 58:74
 Sweet Potato-Russet Potato Gratin with Horseradish & a Dijon Crust, 60:60
 Tostones (Pan-Fried Green Plantains), 56:29
 Ultimate Fluffy Mashed Potatoes, 56:46
 Warm Cabbage Slaw with Bacon Dressing, 56:22
 Warm Potato Salad with Gorgonzola, Baby Spinach & Walnuts, 62:45

Warm Roasted Beets & Shallots with Crisp Prosciutto Dressing, 56:43
 White Beans with Garlic, Lemon & Parmesan, 58:45
 Wild Rice & Bread Dressing with Apple, Apricot & Sage, 60:72
 Wild Rice with Dried Cranberries & Hazelnuts, 60:71
 Wilted Curried Cabbage Slaw, 58:86C

SALADS

Artichoke & Butter Lettuce Salad with Tarragon Vinaigrette, 57:56
 Arugula Salad with Nectarines & Fresh Raspberry Vinaigrette, 58:60
 Bistro Salad with Warm Goat Cheese, 57:21
 Cherry Tomato Bread Salad with Basil & Fresh Mozzarella, 59:38
 Chicken-Apple Salad, 58:65
 Chickpea, Calamari & Zucchini Salad, 59:51
 Chickpea, Carrot & Parsley Salad, 59:82C
 Crab & Avocado Salad, 59:82C
 Frilly Lettuce Salad on a Bed of Beets with Lemon-Walnut Vinaigrette, 56:42
 Frisée Salad with Oranges & Pistachios, 62:86C
 Grilled Bread Salad with Tomatoes & Spicy Greens, 58:38
 Grilled Corn Salad with Cherry Tomatoes, Arugula & Ricotta Salata, 59:50
 Potato Salad with Cilantro, 58:22
 Roasted Red & Yellow Pepper Salad, 58:38
 Tomato, Avocado, Corn & Black Bean Salad, 59:39
 Tomato, Chive & Pine Nut Salad with Gorgonzola Toasts, 59:41
 Tomato & Fresh Green Bean Salad with Crisp Prosciutto, 59:40
 Tomato Salad with Feta, Olives & Mint, 59:37
 Turkey & Blue Cheese Salad with Tarragon-Mustard Vinaigrette, 60:69
 Warm Arugula, Shrimp & Potato Salad, 58:61

SAUCES, CONDIMENTS & SEASONINGS

Brown Butter, 57:59
 Caesar-Style Vinaigrette, 59:60
 Cantonese Orange Sauce, 58:55
 Chinese Black Bean Sauce, 58:55
 Classic Sherry Vinaigrette, 59:60
 Cranberry Sauce with Star Anise & Port, 60:86

Crème Fraîche, 57:74
 Dilled Crème Fraîche, 56:51
 Garam Masala, 58:29
 Lemon-Walnut Vinaigrette, 56:42
 Mayonnaise, 59:72
 Mellow Garlic & Basil Vinaigrette, 59:60
 Melted Garlic Butter, 57:59
 Melted Lemon Butter, 57:59
 Melted Tarragon Butter, 57:59
 Mustard Vinaigrette, 59:60
 Quick Dipping Sauce, 57:33
 Raspberry-Thyme Vinaigrette, 59:60
 Red Wine Sauce, 62:42
 Sesame-Soy Sauce, 58:55
 Spearmint Syrup, 59:70
 Spicy Ginger-Lime-Garlic Vinaigrette, 59:60
 Spicy Roasted Tomato Salsa, 60:70
 Spicy Sichuan Sauce, 58:55
 Sweet & Sour Sauce, 58:63
 Tarragon-Mustard Vinaigrette, 60:69
 Tomato-Ginger Vinaigrette, 59:60
 Turkey Pan Gravy, 60:82

SOUPS & STOCKS

Ajaco (Colombian Chicken Soup), 60:34
 Baked Potato & Leek Soup with Cheddar Cheese & Bacon, 57:78
 Basic Dried Beans, 62:57
 Butternut Squash Soup with Cumin & Coriander, 60:18
 Beef & Wild Rice Soup, 60:73
 Chicken Noodle Soup with Ginger, Shiitakes & Leeks, 56:63
 Chilled Beet Soup with Horseradish Sour Cream, 59:57
 Chilled Curried Carrot Soup, 59:55
 Cinnamon Beef Noodle Soup, 56:61
 Cod Stew with Chorizo, Leeks & Potatoes, 62:86C
 Creamy Chickpea Soup with Crisp Chorizo, 62:58
 Cucumber-Yogurt Soup with Avocado, 59:56
 Potato, Asparagus & Fennel Ragoût, 56:82C
 Roasted Vegetable Minestrone, 62:58
 Spiced Lentil Soup with Herbed Yogurt, 62:59
 Spicy Noodle Soup with Shrimp & Coconut Milk, 56:62
 Turkey & Vegetables in a Saffron-Scented Broth with Couscous, 60:68
 Turkey Gilet Broth, 60:81
 Turkey Soup with Ginger, Lemon & Mint, 60:69
 Turkey Stock, 60:67
 White Bean Soup with Sautéed Shrimp & Garlic Croutons, 62:56

nutritioninformation

Recipe	Page	Calories		Protein	Carb	Fats (g)				Chol.	Sodium	Fiber	Notes
(analysis per serving)		total	from fat	(g)	(g)	total	sat	mono	poly	(mg)	(mg)	(g)	
In Season	16												
Skillet-Roasted Rosemary Potatoes		130	60	2	15	7	1	5	1	0	370	1	based on 4 servings
Savory Coins	38												
Cheddar-Cayenne Coins		45	30	1	3	3.0	1.5	1.0	0.5	10	60	0	per coin
Rosemary-Parmesan Coins		35	20	1	3	2.0	1.5	0.5	0.0	10	60	0	per coin
Sesame Coins		45	25	1	4	3.0	1.5	1.0	0.5	15	75	0	per coin
Chef vs. Chef	41												
Slow-Roasted Beef Tenderloin with Thyme		430	200	54	0	22	8	9	1	160	600	0	based on 8 servings
Red Wine Sauce		100	70	2	2	7	5	2	0	20	25	0	based on 8 servings
Creamed Spinach Amandine		110	90	4	4	10	4	4	1	20	300	3	based on 8 servings
Potatoes Mouseline		350	210	5	33	23	14	7	1	75	270	2	based on 8 servings
Beef Tenderloin Roasted in a Salt Crust		410	250	37	0	28	12	11	1	185	560	0	without added vinaigrette
Warm Potato Salad with Gorgonzola, Spinach & Walnuts		810	570	18	47	64	14	31	16	35	330	6	
Vegetable Sautés	46												
Green Beans & Radicchio with Shaved Parmesan		160	100	6	11	11	3	7	1	5	390	4	with ¼ oz. shaved Parmesan
Fennel & Red Onion with Arugula		120	90	1	8	10	1	7	1	0	330	2	
Mushrooms & Spinach with Soppressata Crisps		90	50	3	7	6	1	4	1	0	400	2	based on 5 servings
Cauliflower & Green Beans with Indian Spices		80	40	2	8	5	1	3	1	0	260	3	based on 6 servings
Marinated Chicken	50												
Lemon Rosemary Balsamic Chicken		680	370	48	28	41	10	22	8	170	1610	1	
Spanish Honey-Cumin Chicken with Apricots & Olives		750	390	49	42	43	10	23	7	170	1520	3	
Triple-Sesame Ginger Chicken		740	370	53	38	41	10	17	12	170	2080	5	
Thai Lemongrass Peanut Chicken		660	360	53	23	40	15	15	8	170	2140	3	
Pavlova	54												
Chocolate Pavlova with Tangerine Whipped Cream		200	80	3	30	9	6	3	0	35	60	2	based on 10 servings
Bean Soups	56												
White Bean Soup with Shrimp & Garlic Croutons		730	240	40	84	27	4	16	5	130	640	15	based on 4 servings (about 1½ cups)
Roasted Vegetable Minestrone		260	60	12	38	7	2	4	1	5	550	7	based on 8 servings (about 1¼ cups)
Creamy Chickpea Soup with Crisp Chorizo		660	410	29	36	46	15	23	5	85	1140	10	based on 4 servings (about 1½ cups)
Spiced Lentil Soup with Herbed Yogurt		350	160	17	34	17	6	9	2	20	420	16	based on 6 servings (about 1 cup)
Macaroni & Cheese	60												
Luxurious Four-Cheese Macaroni & Cheese		710	350	36	54	39	23	11	1	110	1400	3	per main-course serving
Tex-Mex Macaroni & Cheese with Green Chilies		400	210	19	30	23	13	7	1	125	570	2	based on 10 servings
Baked Pasta with Cream & Parmigiano Reggiano		610	360	18	45	40	25	12	2	135	910	2	per main-course serving
Boston Cream Pie	64												
Boston Cream Pie		500	230	10	59	25	12	9	3	225	170	1	
From Our Test Kitchen	70												
Pan-Roasted Duck Breasts with Sherry, Honey & Thyme		460	250	42	3	28	10	12	3	190	610	0	
Hummus with Mellow Garlic & Cumin		180	90	4	18	10	1	6	2	0	270	3	per ¼ cup serving
Quick & Delicious	86C												
Chicken Roulades with Goat Cheese & Sun-Dried Tomatoes		450	160	48	25	17	8	5	2	225	990	2	
Black Bean & Goat Cheese Quesadilla with Guacamole		250	130	8	24	14	4	8	2	10	460	5	per appetizer serving
Cod Stew with Chorizo, Leeks & Potatoes		490	190	37	38	21	7	11	2	85	1340	6	
Sautéed Pork Chops with Rosemary & Red Wine Sauce		320	150	30	8	17	8	6	1	105	550	0	per serving
Frisée Salad with Oranges & Pistachios		290	230	5	16	25	3	17	4	0	250	5	per serving
Glazed Pork Roast with Carrots, Parsnips & Pears		350	120	31	26	14	4	7	1	85	660	5	based on 6 servings
Spicy Meatballs with Fragrant Tomato Sauce		460	230	28	31	26	9	14	2	75	1180	6	
Individual Orange & Chocolate Bread Puddings		600	260	12	80	29	17	9	2	170	370	6	

The nutritional analyses have been calculated by a registered dietitian at The Food Consulting Company of Del Mar, California. When a recipe gives a choice of ingredients, the first choice is the one used in the

calculations. Optional ingredients and those listed without a specific quantity are not included. When a range of ingredient amounts or servings is given, the smaller amount or portion is used. When the

quantity of salt and pepper aren't specified, the analysis is based on ¼ teaspoon salt and ⅛ teaspoon pepper per serving for entrées, and ⅛ teaspoon salt and ⅛ teaspoon pepper per serving for side dishes.

AUSTRALIAN LAMB

easy as one, two, three



ONE RACK OF
AUSTRALIAN LAMB.



TWO TABLESPOONS
OF CRUSHED GARLIC.



THREE TABLESPOONS EACH
OF HONEY, LEMON JUICE,
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la veneziana: a new year's tradition

Panettone la Veneziana is a hand-crafted specialty at Emporio Rulli, Gary Rulli's Italian pastry shop and café in Larkspur, California. "Traditionally, it's served on New Year's Eve, with sparkling wine," says Rulli. But this bread is too good to save for just one night. "Now, even in Italy, people eat it for breakfast, with cappuccino, with tea...anytime."

Gary portions and shapes the panettone dough **1**, which is enriched with egg yolks and butter and studded with candied orange zest. Unlike most bakers, Rulli leavens his panettone with a natural starter, or "mother," which creates deeper flavor, a more open crumb, and a longer shelf life.

Paper collars give the breads extra lift: With its rich topping, La Veneziana needs additional support as it bakes for the best rise. Cooling the breads upside down **2** helps them keep their shape. "Even without the topping, breads made from dough this rich would collapse if we didn't invert them," says Rulli.

A topping of almond paste, coarse sugar, and toasted almonds **3** is the crowning touch. This luscious top crust is what sets Panettone La Veneziana apart from any other panettone.

—Amy Albert, senior editor ♦





Chicken Roulades Stuffed with Goat Cheese & Sun-Dried Tomatoes

Serves four.

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (about 1½ lb. total), rinsed and patted dry**
- 4 oz. fresh goat cheese, crumbled**
- 8 oil-packed sun-dried tomato halves, drained**
- 8 fresh basil leaves, rinsed and patted dry**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 large eggs, beaten in a small bowl**
- 1 cup plain dry bread-crumbs, spread on a plate**
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges**

Position a rack in the middle of the oven and heat the oven to 425°F. Set the chicken on a cutting board and, holding a chef's knife parallel to the board, cut each breast in half so you have eight thin cutlets. Lay plastic wrap over the chicken and pound with a heavy skillet to flatten. Remove the plastic, season the chicken with salt and pepper, and top each piece with the goat cheese, sun-dried tomatoes, and basil (try to keep the fillings in the center of the chicken so they don't slide out the sides). Season with salt

and pepper and roll up each piece starting with the narrow end. Use a toothpick to secure each roulade.

Dip each roulade in the beaten egg and then roll in the breadcrumbs to coat evenly. Transfer to a baking sheet. Season with salt and pepper and roast until the chicken is firm to the touch and an instant-read thermometer inserted in the center of a roulade reads 165°F, about 20 minutes. Set the broiler to high and broil directly under the element until the chicken browns, about 1 minute. Let the roulades rest for a few minutes before removing the toothpicks (with tweezers or pliers, if necessary). Slice the roulades in half on the diagonal and serve four pieces to each person immediately.

tip:

Dress up the breadcrumbs by adding ¼ cup almonds or walnuts pulsed in the food processor, or finely chopped fresh herbs such as rosemary or thyme.



Frisée Salad with Oranges & Pistachios

Serves four.

- 1 large or 2 small heads frisée, rinsed, dried, and torn into bite-size pieces (about 6 cups)**
- 2 navel oranges or blood oranges**
- 2 Tbs. sherry vinegar or red-wine vinegar**
- 1 tsp. honey**
- 3 Tbs. finely diced red onion**
- ⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- ½ cup pistachios, toasted**

Put the frisée in a large salad or mixing bowl. Finely grate the zest of one of the oranges into a small bowl. Slice the skin from both oranges and

cut the orange sections away from the dividing membranes (see how to do this on p. 71); put the sections in another bowl.

Add the vinegar, honey, and onion to the zest, whisk in the oil, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Add just enough of the dressing to the frisée to coat it lightly. Mound the frisée on four salad plates, scraping any red onion remaining in the bowl over the frisée. Arrange the orange slices on top, scatter with the pistachios, and serve immediately.



Cod Stew with Chorizo, Leeks & Potatoes

Serves four.

- 2 small leeks (or 1 large leek)**
- 6 oz. chorizo**
- 1 lb. red potatoes (4 to 5 medium), scrubbed and cut into ¾-inch cubes**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 1 Tbs. olive oil**
- 3 cloves garlic, minced**
- 28-oz. can diced tomatoes, with their juices**
- ½ cup dry white wine**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**
- 1 lb. cod fillet, cut into four even portions**

Trim off the root, the dark greens, and most of the light green parts of the leeks. Chop the leeks into ½-inch pieces and rinse thoroughly to remove all the grit. Cut the chorizo in half lengthwise and slice into half moons about ⅛ inch thick.

Put the potatoes in a large saucepan and cover with cold water by 1 to 2 inches. Salt the water, cover partially, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat as needed and boil until the potatoes are tender, 10 to 15 minutes; drain. While the potatoes cook, heat the oil in a large pot

(choose one that's wide enough to hold the fish in a single layer) over medium heat for 1 minute. Add the chorizo and leeks and cook, stirring occasionally, until the chorizo has browned slightly and the leeks are soft, about 6 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Stir in the tomatoes and their juices, the wine, 1½ cups water, and ½ tsp. salt. Bring to a boil over high heat. Partially cover the pot, reduce the heat to medium, and simmer for 15 minutes. Add the potatoes, season with salt and pepper, and stir in half of the parsley. Season the cod with salt and pepper, set the fillets on top of the stew, cover, and simmer until just cooked through, 6 to 8 minutes. Using a wide spatula, carefully transfer the cod to shallow soup bowls (the fillets may break apart). Spoon the stew over the cod and serve immediately, garnished with the remaining parsley.



Sautéed Pork Chops with Grape, Rosemary & Red Wine Pan Sauce

Serves four.

- 8 thin boneless pork chops (about 1¼ lb.)**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 3 Tbs. unsalted butter**
- 1 cup seedless red grapes, cut in half**
- ½ cup dry red wine**
- 1 tsp. chopped fresh rosemary**
- ½ cup homemade or low-salt canned chicken broth**

Season both sides of the pork chops with salt and pepper. Heat 1 Tbs. of the butter in a large (at least 10-inch) heavy skillet on medium-high heat. When the butter has stopped foaming, add four of the pork chops and sear until the edges are browned and the middles are just beginning to brown, 1½ to 2 minutes. Flip the chops and cook until just cooked

through, 30 to 60 seconds. Transfer the pork to a plate and cover with foil. Repeat with the remaining chops and transfer to the plate. Add the grapes, wine, and rosemary to the skillet and bring the mixture to a boil, scraping the skillet with a wooden spoon to incorporate the browned bits into the sauce. Boil until syrupy, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the chicken broth and any accumulated juices from the pork chops and boil the sauce, stirring occasionally, until reduced by about half, another 3 to 4 minutes. Reduce the heat to low and add the remaining 2 Tbs. butter. Swirl the butter around in the pan until melted. Serve the chops topped with the sauce.



Chorizo, a Spanish smoked pork sausage, is sold in many supermarkets and in Hispanic groceries.



Black Bean & Goat Cheese Quesadillas with Guacamole

Serves eight as an appetizer or three as a main course.

- 3 Tbs. olive oil**
- 1 small yellow onion, finely chopped**
- 15½-oz. can black beans, rinsed and drained**
- 1 tsp. ground cumin**
- 1 tsp. chili powder**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro**
- 1 large or 2 small ripe avocados, pitted and peeled**
- 2 tsp. fresh lime juice; more to taste**
- 3 to 4 oz. fresh goat cheese, crumbled**
- 6 flour tortillas, 8 inches across**

In a medium skillet, heat 2 Tbs. of the oil over medium heat until hot but not smoking. Add the onion and sauté, stirring, until it softens, about 5 minutes. Add the beans, cumin, chili powder, and ½ cup water and cook, stirring occasionally, until almost all the water has evaporated, 5 to 7 minutes. Take the pan off the heat. With the back of a fork, break up the beans to make a chunky mash. Stir in half of the cilantro and season with salt and pepper.

In a small bowl, combine the avocado, lime juice, and remaining cilantro and use a potato masher or the back of

a fork to mash into a chunky paste. Season to taste with salt and pepper; add more lime juice if you like.

Spread the black bean mixture evenly over three of the tortillas. Scatter the goat cheese over the beans and cover with the remaining tortillas. Lightly coat a large heavy skillet or griddle with oil (about 1 tsp.) and heat over medium heat. Set one of the quesadillas in the skillet and cook until lightly browned, about 2 minutes. Flip the quesadilla over and brown on the other side for another 1½ minutes. Remove from the pan, cook the remaining quesadillas (add more oil to the pan each time) and cut each into eight wedges. Serve each wedge with a dollop of the guacamole.

tip:

These quesadillas can be assembled up to a day ahead and cooked just before serving, or cooked a few hours ahead and reheated (wrapped in foil) in a 350°F oven for 10 minutes.



Spicy Meatballs with Fragrant Tomato Sauce

Serves four.

- 1 cup fresh breadcrumbs**
- ⅓ cup milk**
- 2 Tbs. olive oil**
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped (about 1 cup)**
- 2 tsp. ground cumin**
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon**
- ¼ tsp. cayenne**
- 28-oz. can diced tomatoes, with their juices**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 1 lb. ground beef (preferably 85% lean)**
- ⅔ cup finely chopped fresh cilantro**

Combine the breadcrumbs and milk in a mixing bowl and let sit for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a heavy 10-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add 1 tsp. of the cumin, the cinnamon, and ⅓ tsp. of the cayenne and cook for 30 seconds. Add the tomatoes and their juices, 1 cup water, and ½ tsp. salt. Increase the heat to high and bring to a boil. Lower the heat to a steady simmer and cook for 15 minutes.

While the sauce simmers, prepare the meatballs: Mash the breadcrumbs and milk with a fork to a smooth paste. Add the beef, the remaining 1 tsp. cumin, half of the cilantro, 1½ tsp. salt, several grinds of pepper, and the remaining ⅓ tsp. cayenne to the breadcrumbs. Mix with your hands until thoroughly combined. Wet your hands to keep the mixture from sticking to them and roll a couple of tablespoons into 1½-inch balls; you should have about 30. Nestle the meatballs into the sauce, cover, and cook for 10 minutes. Remove the lid and continue to simmer for another 5 minutes to thicken the sauce. Stir in the remaining cilantro and season the sauce with salt and pepper to taste.

Serving suggestion:

Serve over herbed couscous or steamed rice.



Individual Orange & Chocolate Bread Puddings

Serves four.

8 slices good-quality American-style white bread (about 8 oz.)
2 Tbs. unsalted butter, softened; more for the ramekins
1/3 cup orange marmalade
3 oz. (1/2 cup) chopped semisweet chocolate (or 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips)
2 large eggs
1 cup milk
1/2 cup heavy cream
1/3 cup granulated sugar
1/2 tsp. pure vanilla extract

Heat the oven to 375°F. Lightly butter four 1 1/4-cup ramekins. Remove the crusts from the bread and spread one side with the butter and marmalade. Cut the bread into quarters and arrange four quarters in the base of each ramekin, overlapping to fit. Sprinkle with half of the chocolate and repeat with the remaining bread

and chocolate to make two layers.

Whisk the eggs, milk, cream, sugar, and vanilla in a medium bowl or large glass measuring cup. Pour the egg mixture over the bread. Set the ramekins on a baking sheet and bake until puffed and golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes before serving.

tip:

You can assemble the bread puddings and keep them in the refrigerator up to a day ahead. Remove them from the refrigerator 30 minutes before baking, let them come up to room temperature, and bake them when ready to serve.

quick to prep, easy to roast



Glazed Pork Roast with Carrots, Parsnips & Pears

Serves four to six.

2-lb. center-cut boneless pork loin roast
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 1/2 Tbs. Dijon or grainy mustard
1 1/2 Tbs. honey
2 Tbs. roughly chopped fresh sage
1/2 lb. carrots (3 or 4), peeled
1/2 lb. parsnips (3 or 4), peeled
2 firm but ripe Bosc pears, quartered, cored, and stemmed
1 1/2 Tbs. olive oil; more for the pan

Heat the oven to 400°F. Lightly oil the bottom of a medium roasting pan or 15x10-inch Pyrex dish and set the pork in the center. Season the pork with salt and pepper. In a small bowl, mix the mustard, honey, and half of the sage; spread on the top and sides of the pork. If the carrots and parsnips are thick (about 1 inch or larger around), cut them in half or quarters lengthwise so that they're all roughly the same thickness (about 1/2 inch thick at their thickest part). Toss the vegetables and pear wedges with the 1 1/2 Tbs. olive oil and the remaining sage, season with salt and several grinds of pepper, and arrange around the pork. Pour 1/2 cup water into the pan and roast in the center of the oven until an instant-read ther-

mometer inserted in the center of the roast registers 145°F, 30 to 45 minutes. (The cooking time will vary widely depending on the thickness of the roast; start checking early, and check frequently once the temperature reaches 130°F.) Transfer the pork to a carving board. (If the vegetables and pears aren't fully tender by the time the pork is done, return them to the oven until tender, 5 to 10 minutes.) Let the pork rest for 5 minutes before slicing thinly. Serve with the vegetables, pears, and pan juices.



Hands-off cooking: Once you've prepped the roast and popped it in the oven, you're free to do other things.